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MOTOR TREND (ISSN 0027-2094) January 2017, Vol. 69, No. 1. Published monthly by TEN: The Enthusiast Network, LLC, 261 Madison Ave., 6th Floor, New York, NY 10016-2303. Copyright© 2016 by TEN: The Enthusiast Network Magazines, LLC; All rights reserved. Periodicals Postage Paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** U.S. and U.S. Possessions $18 for 12 issues. Canada $30 per year and international orders $42 per year (including surface mail postage). Payment in advance, U.S. funds only. **POSTMASTER:** Send all UAA to CFS. (See DMM 707.4.12.5); NON-POSTAL AND MILITARY FACILITIES: send address corrections to: **MOTOR TREND**, P.O. Box 420235, Palm Coast, FL 32142-0235.

HERE'S THE STORY OF THE ALL-ELECTRIC

2017 BOLT EV

FROM THE ENGINEER AND DESIGNER WHO HAVE CHANGED THE CONVERSATION ABOUT ELECTRIC VEHICLES.

We sat down with Bolt EV Executive Chief Engineer Pamela Fletcher and Chief Designer Stuart Norris to find out how they created the first affordable electric vehicle offering a 238-mile range!

Preproduction model shown throughout. Production model may vary.

PAMELA FLETCHER

CHEVROLET EXECUTIVE CHIEF ENGINEER,
ELECTRIFIED VEHICLES

How did Chevrolet beat every other car company to offer the first affordable electric vehicle with a 238-mile range?

It was a combination of experience and expertise that led to this vehicle. We gathered learnings from the previous generations of Volt and Spark EV, and built a completely new, affordable electric vehicle that had a perfect combination of range, utility and style. And it had to be fun to drive. In the process we took a much bigger look at the future. The engineering and design teams worked through three other different electric vehicle designs before arriving at the Bolt EV. We knew it had to be a phenomenal vehicle that happened to be electric — and it had to be easy to charge. So we offer available DC Fast Charging capability. Bolt EV will change people's perceptions of driving an electric vehicle.

How was your team able to offer 238 miles of range?

People want range in an electric vehicle. To offer 238 miles[1] on a full charge, the battery had to be redesigned in several major ways. We changed the basic construction of the battery cell, the format of how the cells are arranged together, and re-architected how everything is packaged. The battery is an integral part of the driving dynamics and interior packaging. The flat battery allows a flat load floor and easy entry and exit. To build confidence even further, we've provided three ways to charge the vehicle. With the available 240-volt/32-amp charger,[2] charging your Bolt EV is as easy as plugging in your cell phone. And when you consider that the average American drives roughly 40 miles each day, the available range of 238 miles means Bolt EV has plenty of range to handle your daily routine and additional side trips. We've worked to eliminate excuses to not buy an electric vehicle.

> *"We've worked to eliminate excuses to not buy an electric vehicle."*
>
> *Pamela Fletcher*
> CHEVROLET EXECUTIVE CHIEF ENGINEER, ELECTRIFIED VEHICLES

STUART NORRIS

CHEVROLET MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DESIGN

What were your goals when you were designing the Bolt EV?

We wanted to design a great-looking car with a premium feel that just happened to be electric. We achieved this from the inside out. The very low beltline improves visibility and creates a spacious interior, especially up front. We created a floating dash and console and pushed the wheels out to the corners to maximize interior space. There's a fresh approach both in the proportions and the surface language, which you can see in details like the lamps, the grilles, and in the unique rear-end execution. Some electric vehicles feel delicate, so we wanted our vehicle to have a feeling of strength. Bolt EV has distinctive proportions and it completely comes alive when it's on the road, which is the ultimate test of every car design.

When designing the interior, were there any specific considerations built around Bolt EV technology?

The Bolt EV touch-screen is the size of a tablet and acts as the nerve center for the dash. The user interface is very approachable and intuitive. It was important that gauge design and layout were easy to understand. For example, the Confidence Gauge provides at-a-glance, real-time information so you don't have to think about range. You can monitor patterns in your daily commute and how your driving style and factors like terrain and temperature are having an impact on efficiency. And you should see what happens when it goes from day to night. We kept the signature Chevrolet dual cockpit interior, tweaked it for optimal usability and balanced it with very strong symmetry throughout the rest of the vehicle.

CHEVROLET
FIND NEW ROADS

1 Based on all-electric vehicles in the market as of October 2016. EPA-estimated 238-mile EV range. Your actual range may vary based on several factors including temperature, terrain and driving technique. Limited availability beginning late 2016 in select markets. 2 Professional installation required.

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RAPTOR FIGHTER The Ram Rebel TRX Concept gives us hope for a new off-road pickup rivalry.

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BFGoodrich Tires

Edward Loh @EdLoh

The Lohdown

Kaizen Of The Year

Welcome to our second annual *Motor Trend* Awards issue: an extra-special, extra-thick issue devoted to our four signature awards: Car, Truck, SUV, and Person of the Year.

We began awarding Car of the Year back in 1949, *Motor Trend*'s first year of publication. Since then, the award has become the gold standard in the industry and expanded to call out the coming year's top performing truck, SUV, and, as of last year, automotive executive.

As Angus details on page 177, a special relationship has given us the ability to hone and elevate our Car of the Year program over the past 10 years. The decade we've spent at Hyundai Motor Group California Proving Ground has been so rewarding that we've expanded the use of such facilities across all of our vehicle award programs.

We had already started this process a few years ago with Truck of the Year, as truck capabilities grew broader and deeper. We sampled the proving grounds of leading manufacturers—including Nissan and Continental Tire—before finding the right mix of location and capabilities at FCA's Arizona Proving Ground.

Last year, when the total number of SUVs and crossovers at SUV of the Year eclipsed the number of cars at Car of the Year, we knew we had to expand that program, as well. So we approached American Honda, who had just started reinvesting in its long-dormant Honda Proving Center, for permission to run SUVs on its oval and special surfaces.

Kaizen, a manufacturing principle pioneered by Toyota that essentially means continuous improvement, is how we roll at *Motor Trend*. As auto manufacturers continue to invest in and incrementally improve their vehicles, we must better our evaluation process, as well. We do so not only by adding testing methods and facilities but also by bringing on new, experienced hands.

Alisa Priddle came aboard in February, and after her run through SUV and Car of the Year, she told me she was deeply impressed with our disciplined and informed approach. Chris Bacarella, who joined up in April, was taken aback by the volume of notes and sheer force of effort required to put on one OTY event, let alone three. And Mark Rechtin jumped into the awards cycle one week after he joined the team, before he even had a chance to unpack his boxes. His thoughts about our process are in this month's "Reference Mark" (page 24).

In this kaizen spirit, we also dramatically changed the way we present our three Of the Year stories. For the past few years, we've loaded up each page with data, dimensions, and a short review of each contender. There was little prose on how each program progressed, and unless you read closely and occasionally between the lines, you could miss the bigger picture. So this year, we cut back a bit on the reviews and numbers and added a running narrative across the bottom of each page. This bifurcated reading experience allows you to jump around all of the new 2017 models or simply read the issue straight through to learn how we cut the field and arrive at our winners.

This is new for all of us this year, so in the spirit of a better reading experience next year, I'd appreciate any feedback you may have. Let me know on Twitter, @edloh. Enjoy the issue.

Special shout out to the *Motor Trend* staffers who "hit for the cycle" through summer and fall 2016. Scott Evans, Benson Kong, Jonny Lieberman, Cory Lutz, Brian Vance, William Walker, and Chris Walton all took part in Best Driver's Car, SUVOTY, COTY, and TOTY. Add up the days, and that is easily a solid month on the road, sleeping in crappy hotels, and drinking terrible coffee.

What's On Demand This Month?

TUNE IN To relive the night and see more exclusive content, check out MTOD.

THE MOTOR TREND AWARDS

We interrupt this regularly scheduled update of the Motor Trend OnDemand calendar with a special announcement. By the time you read this, we will have handed over the hardware to our Car, Truck, SUV, and Person of the Year at a very special awards gala at the swanky Theater at Ace Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. If you want to see a replay of the show and cheer on all the winners, head to motortrendawards.com.

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DEC. 1 Porsche Carrera Cup Asia (Shanghai)
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DEC. 23 ROADKILL **Ep. 61**

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A SHOWDOWN FOR SKIN SUPREMACY

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THIS MONTH'S HOT METAL

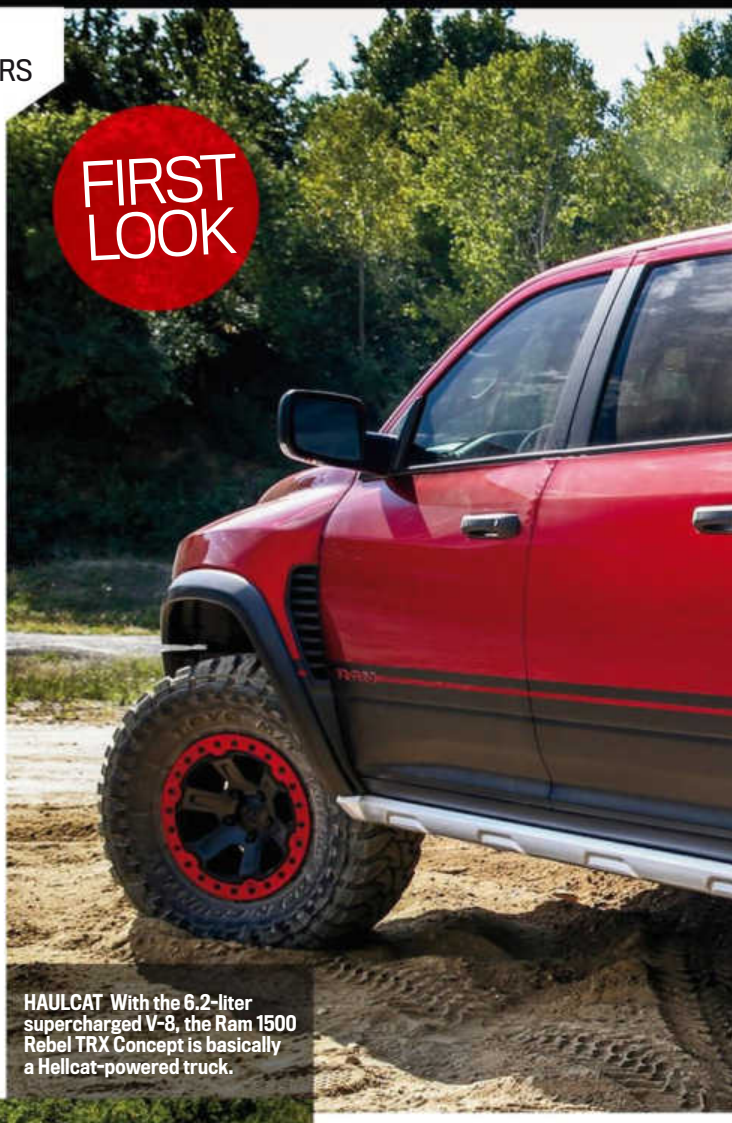
WE SAY P24
WORDS FROM OUR EDITORS

Ram Rebel TRX Concept

FIRST LOOK

Is this Ram's Raptor killer? Based on the Ram 1500, the Rebel TRX Concept is the most powerful half-ton truck Ram has ever produced, and it's capable of off-road runs at more than 100 mph. We hope it's also a hint at an upcoming Ford F-150 Raptor fighter.

A 575-hp 6.2-liter supercharged V-8 lives under the hood and comes with an eight-speed automatic optimized for off-road performance. If the powertrain sounds familiar, that's because the engine is a detuned version of the one in the Challenger and Charger Hellcat. Ram's 4x4 Performance Control System comes standard along with a 44-45 Borg Warner transfer case. The front suspension is the same as in the Ram 1500 and features an open differential and CV halfshafts specifically made to handle the wider track. In the rear, there's a link coil setup with a Dynatrac 60 axle plus 1.5-inch axle shafts and an electric selectable locker that spreads the torque load and maximizes traction when performing full-throttle maneuvers. The rear axle travel span has also been increased to 13.0 inches in the Rebel TRX Concept compared to the standard truck's 9.3 inches. Ram has added new 2.5-inch bypass shocks and factory-spec upper and lower mounts and performance springs in the rear.



HAULCAT With the 6.2-liter supercharged V-8, the Ram 1500 Rebel TRX Concept is basically a Hellcat-powered truck.

Braking performance is provided by Baer six-piston monoblock calipers with 15-inch front and 14-inch rear rotors. To improve ground clearance, it gets a 40 percent suspension travel increase and 37-inch tires, which are 13.5 inches wide and feature a 10-ply design. Beadlock wheels have been added to help put that torque to the ground. The TRX also has two full-size spare tires and a lockable toolbox in the bed.

Ram has given the cabin an off-road-racer theme and outfitted all four seats with six-point harnesses and a custom camera mount on the rearview mirror. **Stefan Ogbac**

NO ROADS NEEDED This Rebel is at its best doing high-speed runs through the desert, and it comes prepared.

THEY SAY P30 INTERVIEW
PETER SCHREYER PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DESIGN OFFICER, HYUNDAI MOTOR GROUP

YOUR SAY P32
READERS TALK BACK

We hope the Ram Rebel TRX Concept is a hint at an upcoming Ford F-150 Raptor fighter.

LOOKING THE PART
The interior features an off-road theme and comes with FCA's Uconnect multimedia interface.

Intake

COMING SOON
The Mercedes-Benz Generation EQ concept is set to launch a new electrified sub-brand in 2019.

FIRST LOOK

Mercedes-Benz Generation EQ Concept

This is more than just another electric vehicle concept. The Mercedes-Benz Generation EQ is a close-to-production EV with a 70-kW-hr lithium-ion battery good for a Tesla-trumping 300 miles, and it ushers in a new electric brand for the German automaker.

The concept has two motors and scalable battery components that permit discharge rates at up to 300 kilowatts (402 hp), ensuring sub-five-second 0–60 acceleration with permanent all-wheel drive.

"The emission-free automobile is the future," said Dieter Zetsche, CEO of Daimler AG and head of Mercedes-Benz Cars, adding that the new EQ brand goes beyond electric vehicles and stands for a comprehensive electric ecosystem of services, technologies, and innovations.

EQ stands for "Electric Intelligence," according to Mercedes-Benz executives, who offered no explanation for the "Q," as Electric Intelligence in German is *elektrische Intelligenz*.

But that's a pedantic point in a much larger scenario. The new generation of EVs will be based on an architecture developed specifically for battery-electric models, and it's scalable in every respect and usable across all models. It's also suitable for every body style. Future vehicles will use a mix of steel, aluminum, and carbon fiber to keep their weight down for added efficiency.

Gorden Wagener, the Daimler design chief, said the new brand will reinterpret design to create an avant-garde, contemporary look. The cars will have a distinct interior with touch-based controls and no knobs. The instrument panel has a 24-inch floating widescreen and shows Mercedes-Benz's user-interface direction, allowing occupants to individualize content and colors of the display.

The center console appears to float in space and has touch-sensitive elements. Climate controls and infotainment are activated with the touch of a finger on the steering wheel. The navigation map shows all the destinations that can be reached on the current battery charge. Side mirrors are replaced by cameras to view traffic behind the car and project the information onto displays in the doors, which are themselves opened with a single touch.

The EQ also has stereo speakers integrated into the head restraints. Back-seat occupants have a choice of three screens for entertainment. Generation EQ also has Car-to-X tech, meaning a car can exchange information with its surroundings as part of its suite of driver-assist technologies.

Zetsche said this marks an "electric product offensive that will cover all vehicle segments, from the compact to the luxury class." He also teased an upcoming Formula 1-based hypercar, which is intended to compete with the Aston Martin/Red Bull collaboration, the AM-RB 001, and which might become the EQ-brand flagship.

Alisa Priddle

MISSED THE LIVESTREAM?

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Intake

MIKE CONNOR

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GM is rumored to be working on an independent rear suspension for its next-gen full-size SUVs. This would make GM's full-size SUVs ride as well as the IRS Ford Expedition and Lincoln Navigator and deliver extra room for third-row passengers. No word on whether IRS would be standard across the lineup, but if it appears the 2019 Cadillac Escalade and GMC Yukon Denali are obvious recipients.

BMW is having an each-way bet on the future of the sports car. The next-gen i8, due in 2022, is to become a pure EV. The three-cylinder engine will be dumped in favor of a bigger battery pack and two more electric motors to give a powertrain with a total system output of about 670 hp. Meanwhile, BMW is working with McLaren to create a new hybrid hypercar, which will appear in 2019. BMW built the 618-hp 6.1-liter V-12 that powered the legendary McLaren F1 but is said to be designing a turbo V-6 to work with McLaren's electric motors. **While on the subject of BMW** electric cars, the i3 is looking like an expensive dud. After all, GM's Bolt EV offers more than twice the range for less money, and it's much more fun to drive. You have to wonder why BMW didn't choose Mini as its EV spearhead instead; a second all-electric Mini, the Mini E, is coming, expected in 2019. It gets a version of the i3 powertrain, but the battery pack will have to be shrunk by one-third to make it fit, so predicted range is an uncompetitive 90 miles.

"They should come back when they have a real car." That was the assessment of a Daimler insider when asked how the Mercedes-AMG hybrid hypercar announced at the Paris show would stack up against the AM-RB 001. The Mercedes-AMG hypercar will feature a hybrid powertrain based around the 1.6-liter V-6 and energy-recovery systems used in current Mercedes-powered F1 cars, reportedly with a total output of 1,300 hp. "The Aston is an aerodynamic study by Adrian Newey," the insider said. "There's no room for people inside, or for an engine, and no way of cooling it." Over to you, Aston.

FIRST LOOK

2018 Chevrolet Equinox

Chevy chose the autumnal equinox to unveil the day's namesake compact crossover, which will go on sale in spring as a 2018 model.

As with practically every new car, it's lighter and stiffer due to expanded use of fancy high-strength steel. Naturally, the design is optimized for the IIHS small-offset test. Overall mass is said to drop by as much as 400 pounds(!), owing in part to a notable reduction in size. The wheelbase and length are shortened by 5.2 and 4.7 inches, respectively, height drops 0.9 inch, and width actually expands by 0.1 inch. The shrinkage accounts for around half of the weight loss, and improved efficiency of the structure, including a dramatic increase in the number of welds and structural adhesives employed, help trim another 80–100 pounds. The balance is in things bolted to the structure.

Performance should not suffer with the switch to a downsized turbocharged engine lineup. The new 1.5-liter is expected to be SAE-certified to 170 hp and 203 lb-ft. That's 12 fewer horses but 31 more lb-ft of torque than the outgoing 2.4-liter naturally aspirated base engine. EPA figures are not yet available, but we're told to expect 31 mpg highway from this little motor and its six-speed automatic gearbox.

The 2.0-liter, which we quite like in most other applications, should be certified at 252 hp and 260 lb-ft, down 19 hp and 12 lb-ft from the old V-6, but this engine will get the added leverage of a nine-speed automatic transmission developed with Ford. It boasts a wider gear ratio spread (7.6 versus 6.1), a taller ninth gear (eighth equals the outgoing sixth), and a shorter first gear. This combined with the lighter weight allows the 2.0-liter to match the V-6's 3,500-pound tow rating and should ensure equivalent or better performance; highway fuel economy is estimated at 28 mpg, well up from 24 with the front-drive V-6.

And then there's the segment-exclusive diesel. It's from a completely different engine family than the ones in the former Cruze and current Colorado. We're promised it makes the Equinox fun to drive with an output of 136 hp and 236 lb-ft of torque and an estimated 40 mpg highway with its six-speed automatic.

Even the optional all-wheel-drive system gets a makeover, moving to the driver-selectable GKN design in use on the GMC Acadia. Its system of clutches allows the driveshaft to be disconnected, reducing friction and rotational inertia when drive to the rear is not required. **Frank Markus**

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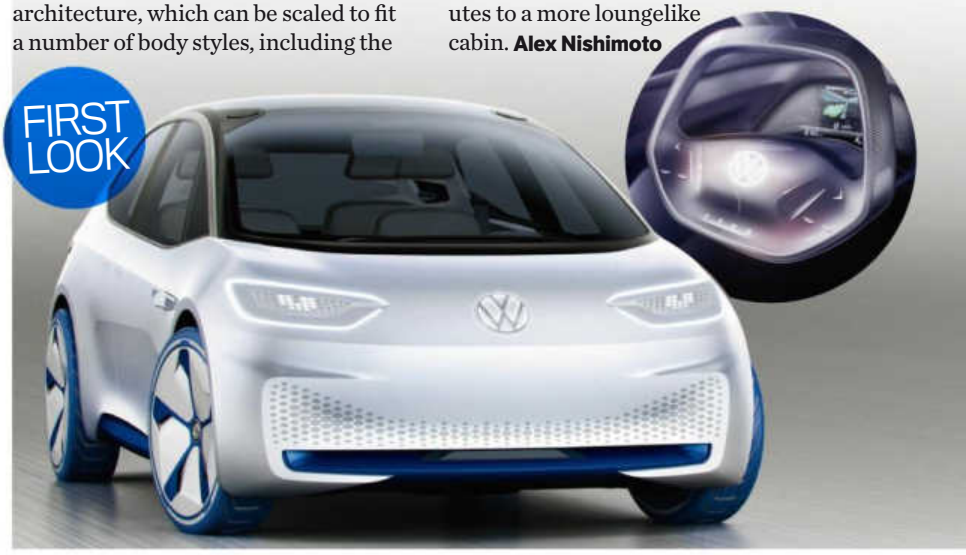
Intake

Volkswagen I.D. Concept

Volkswagen is pushing hard into the EV market. It's calling the debut of the I.D. Concept as significant as the original Beetle and Golf models.

A pure electric vehicle, the I.D. achieves between 249 and 373 miles per charge, based on the wildly optimistic New European Driving Cycle. A flat lithium-ion battery pack sandwiched in the floor provides juice to the rear-mounted 168-hp electric motor, which can bring the concept to 62 mph in less than 8 seconds and generate a top speed of 99 mph. The Volkswagen I.D. rides on VW's MEB modular electric architecture, which can be scaled to fit a number of body styles, including the BUDD-e microbus concept that debuted the platform.

But perhaps more important than the electric car tech, the I.D. gives us a glimpse at what to expect from Volkswagen in terms of its autonomous technologies and car-sharing strategy. The concept looks beyond its 2020 launch date with its I.D. Pilot mode, a fully autonomous feature that VW says should be ready by 2025. Autonomous driving is activated via a button on the steering wheel, which retracts when the car drives itself. The battery pack and motor packaging already free up space, but stowing the steering wheel contributes to a more loungelike cabin. **Alex Nishimoto**



Remembering Brock Yates

Brock Yates, former *Car and Driver* editor and founder of the Cannonball Baker Sea-to-Shining-Sea Memorial Trophy Dash and One Lap of America events, died on October 5. He was 82.

"Today, after suffering with Alzheimer's for the last 12 years, my father finally succumbed," Yates' son, Brock Yates Jr., wrote on Facebook. "He touched many lives, but sadly no more."

Born on October 21, 1933, Yates began his career as an automotive journalist in the 1960s and eventually went on to helm our longtime competitor in 1966. In the 1970s, Yates, with help from another editor, came up with the aforementioned cross-country dash (known as the Cannonball Run, for short). The event was an unsanctioned protest of the imminent 55-mph national speed limit and was held until 1979. Yates wrote a screenplay based on the races that eventually became 1981's classic *The Cannonball Run*. A year prior, he co-wrote the screenplay for *Smokey and the Bandit II*.

In 1984, Yates dreamt up a new event called One Lap of America. The annual event, which still runs today, focused more on motorsports but continued the cross-country theme of the Cannonball years with time/speed/distance rally competition on public roads and race tracks around the country. *Motor Trend* followed One Lap in 2009, 2010, and 2011. **Alex Nishimoto**

01.17 TREND

PRACTICAL EV When the production I.D. arrives in 2020, it will offer a practical driving range at about the same price as a diesel Golf today.

From the *Motor Trend* Archive...

REARVIEW

SPECIAL ENGINE ISSUE!
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'67 POWER OPTIONS • SPECS • PRICES
BEST ENGINE-TRANSMISSION TEAMS
TEST OF STICK GTO VS. AUTOMATIC
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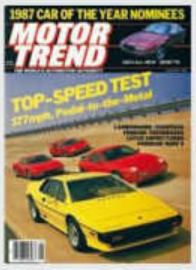
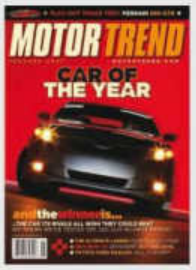
THE DEADLY LOOPHOLES IN DRIVER LICENSING
THE ELECTRIC CAR MYTH
ROAD TEST: FWD ELDORADO
RACING: BRABHAM'S SWINGING OLDS
NATIONAL 500

50

JANUARY 1967
PRICE: $0.50
It's ironic that our January 1967 issue touts "The Electric Car Myth." The rest was dedicated to good old-fashioned internal combustion engines and settling the age-old manual versus automatic debate by testing two Pontiac GTOs to see which one was fastest.





30

JANUARY 1987
PRICE: $2.50
Who doesn't like a top speed test? Our cover featured a pedal-to-the-metal test of the Lamborghini Countach, Ferrari Testarossa, Lotus Esprit Turbo, and Porsche 928 S4.

10

JANUARY 2007
PRICE: $3.99
The Toyota Camry might get a lot of flak from automotive enthusiasts, but the best-selling midsize family sedan had the right stuff to earn the 2007 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year award.

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Paul Fredrick

We Say...

Mark Rechtin
REFERENCE MARK

Sand and Deliver Three contests, six weeks, and a river of Gatorade

I have tested thousands of vehicles during my career as an automotive journalist, served terms on other awards juries, and worked for two years at a 327-acre testing facility with a dedicated 2.8-mile private track.

But nowhere have I seen the organizational skill, talent, and occasional full-throated fury that *Motor Trend* brings to bear in determining its Car, Truck, and SUV of the Year.

The *MT* caravan of 30 includes testers, engineers, writers, editors, video producers, photographers, production assistants, and support staff. Each Of The Year venture—Car, Truck, and SUV—takes months to plan the logistics, and they take place back to back over the hottest six weeks in the Southwestern desert.

We complete *MT*'s standard battery of instrumented tests (0-60 mph and quarter-mile acceleration, 60-0 deceleration, and a figure-eight handling test) of all 74 vehicles jockeying for our coveted Golden Calipers. Then we take them to the streets for real-world evaluation.

The days run from rooster crow to well past dark. The 103-degree temps take their toll in fatigue, sunburn, windburn, parched throats, split fingernails, and bloody noses. In the high desert, you lift your gear bags carefully, mindful of tetchy fauna ready to hitch a ride.

How hard is it to get a few cars together, run some hot laps, and snap some pictures? Let's run through some supply-chain challenges of just one of the three contests.

First, ensure the dozens of vehicles are transported to a remote location at a specific time. How do we get them there? If the vehicles arrived on flatbeds, do we have enough drivers on site to return them to the city? Do we have enough daylight to finish all our tests? In the middle of the desert, where do you go to refill gas tanks or recharge batteries? How do we schedule it so every editor gets seat time in every car while shooters have sufficient locations to capture images and shoot video? What happens if one (or several) of the cars break down under our rigorous evaluation? And who stays behind at the office to ensure the website stays running smoothly?

Then there's the other supply challenge: the food chain. How much water do you need to haul in to keep the team hydrated in the desert's blazing kiln? (Answer: We needed 20 36-bottle cases from Costco, and that's not counting the Gatorade, Perrier, and LaCroix allocation.) Who will deliver lunch to the middle of nowhere? And after 9 p.m., when the team is just wrapping up for the day, are there any restaurants still open and willing to serve our famished army?

As for where we conduct the testing, how do we earn the trust of automakers that allow us onto their top-secret test facilities? Will they permit us to perform high-speed runs on their ovals? And how can we assure them that our photographers will turn a blind eye as the automakers' future products roll by, wrapped in camouflage? (Deepest thanks to Hyundai, Honda, and Fiat Chrysler for working with us.)

Then there are the myriad issues no one can foresee. What happens if testing gets rained out or there's a lightning-spitting monsoon approaching rapidly at the golden hour on the day we're going to take beauty-shot photography? What happens if someone has a dodgy stomach that turns into full-blown appendicitis? (All happened. We are relieved to report photographer Robin is recovering well following emergency surgery.)

It is these infinitely small pieces that must fall into place to create the big picture. Of engineers tenacious enough to repeat the same test hundreds of times, sensitive enough to discern the minute differences between results, and creative enough to put their findings into inspired writing. Of production assistants willing to clean bug splat off endless windshields and haul loads of camera gear—but who also know how to safely and quickly hook up a 30,000-pound trailer rig. And a visual arts department that goes beyond merely capturing images to expose a visual narrative of their own.

Famed mid-century architect Charles Eames once said, "The details are not the details. They make the design." Those details—and the comprehensive attention paid to them—are what differentiate the *Motor Trend* awards. ■

DESERT DAYS You can prepare only so much for life in remote California, as we discovered when Robin Trajano was taken ill.

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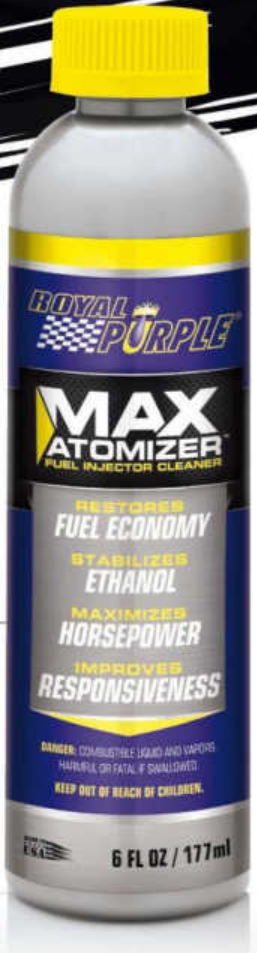

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We Say...

Frank Markus
TECHNOLOGUE

Drunk on CO_2 Drown your global-warming sorrows in ethanol

Sometimes scientists just get lucky. That's what happened recently at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where researchers were experimenting with a low-cost electrochemical catalyst featuring nanotechnology. The team was hoping to turn CO_2 and water into something mildly more useful, perhaps methane (CH_4)—a long shot, considering that feat requires stripping an oxygen molecule off the CO_2 and dissociating the hydrogen atoms from the water molecules then somehow recombining them. Imagine the surprise and delight when this one catalyst somehow managed to deliver ethanol—aka C_2H_6O.

This was a big deal because forming a carbon-carbon bond and assembling all those extra hydrogens should be a fussy process. I've covered several such tricky attempts at converting CO_2 back into usable fuels (see July 2013's "fireball fuel bug" microbe that produced biobutanol, March 2012's complicated multistep formic-acid fuel cell that tried to produce bio-gasoline, and July 2008's CO_2 -to-methanol gambit). Those schemes generally involved lots of energy input and catalysts loaded with precious metals. The effort by Adam Rondinone's Center for Nanophase Materials Sciences appears more promising, thanks to its affordable catalyst and room-temperature reaction. Best of all, the researchers don't know exactly how or why it works.

The catalyst in question consists of a fine carpet of carbon nano spikes, roughly 50–80 nanometers "tall," into which are snagged a whole slew of copper nanospheres averaging 39 nm in diameter. (The carbon matrix also includes some nitrogen atoms.) Copper has long been used as a catalyst for electrochemically reducing CO_2 into any of 30 chemicals, all of which are far lighter than ethanol. As near as anybody can figure, the process—which is likened to a reversal of combustion—happens because of the way the copper spheres touch the usually hooked 2-nm-wide ends of these carbon spikes. With electricity applied, the copper helps create carbon monoxide. The nearby carbon spikes help turn matched sets (dimers) of this CO into alcohol, grabbing hydrogen atoms from the water the CO_2 is dissolved in, possibly with an intermediate step forming ethylene or ethane—nobody knows for sure yet.

What the research team does know is that when you bubble CO_2 into a potassium bicarbonate and water solution then expose it to this electrified catalyst, the electrochemical yield is 63 percent. That means for every 100 electrons that go in, 63 of them end up in ethanol (most of the rest yield hydrogen gas), which would be separated from the bicarbonate/water solution via a membrane.

So if you were to reverse the combustion process, that would mean the energy you put in has to be close to what would come out when you burned the ethanol, right? Rondinone's group has focused on the science, not the engineering of a production-scale operation. With no optimization of the catalyst or the solution, he estimates the efficiency at about 20 percent. But he believes that with proper optimization at a systems level, the "well-to-wheels" efficiency could compete with the overall energy balance of corn-ethanol production, including land use, trucking, and distillation.

His team envisions electrochemical CO_2 reduction as an energy-storage solution for power grids like California's, which are fed by numerous renewable sources with fossil-fuel power supplying energy in between windy/sunny times. Those fossil plants don't love being throttled up and down. If they are able to convert their own CO_2 output into ethanol using surplus energy when the wind and solar farms are cranking away, we could be getting something for next to nothing—easily distributed and consumed energy that may even prove safer than warehouse-sized batteries. ■

PHOTO: Oak Ridge National Laboratory

IT'S A MIRACLE! That's not a blurry shot of drunken revelers at a rave. It's an extreme close-up of nano-scale carbon "lightning rods" and copper spheres ready to turn CO_2 into booze.

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They Say

Peter Schreyer

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DESIGN OFFICER, HYUNDAI MOTOR GROUP

Interview

After a career stretch at Audi and Volkswagen, German designer Peter Schreyer joined Kia Motors 10 years ago and quickly introduced the tiger-nose grille and a new lineup of eye-catching cars that redefined the brand and helped spur a tripling of global sales. He now oversees design for Kia, Hyundai, and the new Genesis luxury brand. We sat down with Schreyer at the Paris Motor Show to talk about his career and the future of the brands he is crafting.

After 10 years, where is Kia design now?
When I first started, I knew I could make a change—not just to one model, but to try to develop the brand. I never dreamt how far Kia has come. It is a surprise to me. We have to keep going. We have some interesting arrows in our quiver. The Kia brand is rocketing, and with [new products coming] it will change quite a bit, especially in the U.S.

> "The clientele for [the G90] would not like a fancy, colorful suit. ... Athletic elegance is key. Proportion is important."

You have developed a signature look. Do you need to refine that or make big changes?
It is important to make big steps, but the philosophy doesn't change. Design depends on the development and progress of technologies and different customer demands and expectations, not so much on the styling. I just try to improve the product.

What kind of opportunities do autonomous vehicles give you as a designer?
That is the question of the day. It will be a long time of overlap and mixed traffic before autonomous vehicles take over the streets, so we need to find ways to overlap. The technologies are developing fast. If the car drives itself, you have a lot of freedom. A car is still part of your behavior and your individuality. This is something that must be kept, or it becomes like catching a train.

Do you get excited about what you can design when you remove conventional mechanisms?
Sure. You can change the environment. Like seating. Do you sit backward? Then you have to care about motion sickness. You have the possibility to avoid accidents completely, which means you might not need airbags at all, which creates a new environment. Maybe you don't have a dash.

What is the design goal for the new Genesis luxury brand?
It is separate design-wise and a separate philosophy from Hyundai and Kia. It is another animal. Hyundai and Kia are in a constant competition and challenge each other. Genesis should be completely independent.

The first Genesis, the G90, is very conservative. Is that the statement you wanted?
For the G90, you cannot do something too fancy because the clientele for this kind of car would not like a fancy, colorful suit. It is for a more conservative person. It must be like an elegant, well-fitting suit. Athletic elegance is the key. Proportion is important. The New York Concept we showed last year gives you an idea of how we are working for Genesis. It will influence future products.

Kia and Hyundai must be different. But it seems the Hyundai Veloster should have been a Kia, and the Kia K900 should have been a Hyundai.
My job is to keep the two brands apart in basic philosophy. It is impossible to avoid similarities.

We need to look for cars that are a little bit like the black sheep of the family or something special. Hyundai needs emotional cars. I think the Veloster is a Hyundai completely. I think the asymmetrical doors fit better with Hyundai than with Kia. Hyundai is the mother company, and it is more settled, more mature. Kia is the youthful challenger. It is like a sparring partner. It makes both of them a lot stronger and eager to win. In Korea they compete for sales. The K900 is very different from the G90.

Will you still be here 10 years from now?
I will be here a few more years anyway. Why not in 10 years, if as a designer you are still hungry? As designers we have the freedom to rewrite our history.

Any holes in the Kia lineup?
We're going to fill a few more holes. There are always dreams that would be great to do, like a convertible. I think I will be here long enough to make it.

But a pickup does not make sense for Kia?
Not really. It is something that is discussed once in a while, but it is very difficult. Pickup trucks in America are so strong. It's like trying to get a Bavarian into lederhosen made in China. But it could be an interesting project. Hyundai has the Santa Cruz. **Alisa Priddle**

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READERS' THOUGHTS ON PAST ISSUES

Catchin' 'em young

An issue of *Motor Trend* published the first Chevy Panther I ever saw. Even at 14, I was eager to see Chevy's answer to the Mustang. At first it didn't look too impressive, but I knew Chevrolet wouldn't let me down—and they didn't when it came to the production cars. Those hide-away headlamps were cool.

Little did I know that I would buy a 1-year-old 1971 Z28 for $2,500 at age 20 in 1972. She had many options for its day, most performance options like a close-ratio four-speed and 4.10 rear axle. Placer Gold with black stripes, she had a brown vinyl interior, PS, PB, tinted windows, and an AM radio. The Z28 had 15-inch wheels standard. The engine spun a bearing for no good reason at 12,500 miles just after I bought the car. There's a lesson in engine repair! The 350 demanded constant attention, not helped by its solid lifters. She remained a pain in the neck (and wallet) for the remainder of my ownership. On the minor side I added a radiator overflow tank after my brother drove it to Kent State 40 miles away, and it kept overheating and blowing coolant out the overflow tube. Chevy thought to make this standard in 1972 models. This car was primitive by today's standards, but it seemed pretty smooth at the time with the power-assisted steering and brakes. You could expect 9–12 mpg, 6,000 for spark plugs and tune up, 15,000 miles for brakes, and replace the right and left exhaust pipes to the transverse muffler ever other year. Sixty thousand miles is all you'll get with a 4.10 rearend that'll tach about 3,300 rpm at 60. Thieves tried to steal her three times over a seven-year period. Ever jump in front of your car to keep it from driving away?

Her days were numbered after I graduated from Cleveland State and found a job 26 miles away from home. Fighting rust, a company car, and a desire for a Corvette led me to sell her for $2,200 in 1979. Too bad I didn't have the money then to fix it right. They still look great and command a high value these days.

DEAN PASQUALE
WILLOUGHBY, OHIO

A classic ponycar love story. Sure, she was a pain to maintain. And maybe she didn't have the fanciest of instrument panels (being from the pre-infotainment era). But she was yours, and you defended her with your life. If only all cars could inspire such emotion.—Ed.

I have been reading Motor Trend for many, many years. Reading Ed's column on the 50th anniversary of the Camaro ("The Lohdown," October 2016) really brought back memories of a friend that I had. He used to do the same thing with me, and I would give him gas money. He had a black '71 Camaro or something like that. I think I was 15 or 16, and boy, the smell of that car, the smell of the exhaust, the engine, the feeling underneath your legs just felt amazing!

So thank you, my friend. Your column really brought back a cherished memory, and you did a dang good job conveying the magic.

RICH LODATO
GLENSIDE, PA

The magic of a teenager with a ponycar. We're sensing a pattern here.—Ed

Your article covering the 50th anniversary of the Camaro got me thinking about the cost of entry and demographic for these cars. Originally, Mustangs and Camaros were supposed to be two things: cheap and fast. That's why they were such a hit with the young generation. Even when I was a college student in the late 1990s, I was able to buy a used '93 Z28 for $6,300. It was one of the fastest cars around, and it was affordable.

Your long-term tester 2016 SS is listed at $46,080 with the few options you got. That puts it at almost double the price of the new LT1 cars of my day. Who in their 20s can afford a $46,000 car? Or even afford a lightly used one? And yeah, I realize there are other engine options, but c'mon ... people buying these cars want the V-8 now just like we did then.

Seems to me that Ford and especially Chevy are pricing these cars to a new demographic.

SHAWN CROWE
LAWRENCEBURG, KENTUCKY

Running these stories through a simple inflation calculator paints a clear picture. Ponycar prices ain't what they used to be. What this means for future Ed Lohs and Shawn Crowes remains to be seen, but we sure wish more kids could reasonably obtain a lustworthy new(ish) car.—Ed.

But not catching them all

As a long-term subscriber to five monthly car rags and one weekly one, I have a wealth of experience at catching errors. I routinely let those go and have until now never written a letter to the editor of any publication concerning errors. But this oversight I cannot dismiss.

Any self-respecting car geek that was in junior high or high school during the Brat Pack era knows that the weakest lump GM ever dumped under the hood of the Camaro/Firebird twins was the 2.5-liter Iron Duke. It basically was a 305 sliced down the middle of the vee. If memory serves, it was capable of producing all of 92 hp worth of throttle-body fuel-injected fury and was often referred to as the Low Tech IV.

Zero to 60? Maybe ... if you happened to be going downhill with a tailwind. Even then, quarter-mile times could be measured with an hourglass. 1982–'84 were the only years of production for this POS and the definitive low point of performance for the GM F-bodies.

BRIAN HOLMES
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA

Would you believe us if we said we didn't mention the Iron Duke because we don't consider a car with 90 horsepower an actual Camaro? No? Well ... then I suppose we'll fess up to regrettably omitting that utterly forgettable car.—Ed.

READERS ON LOCATION

Long-time subscriber MIKE SWISTAK of Hudsonville, Michigan, had a short list of necessities for his hike to the Mount Oberlin summit above Logan Pass in Glacier National Park: food, water, clothing, bear spray, and *Motor Trend*. We couldn't survive the wilderness without us, either.

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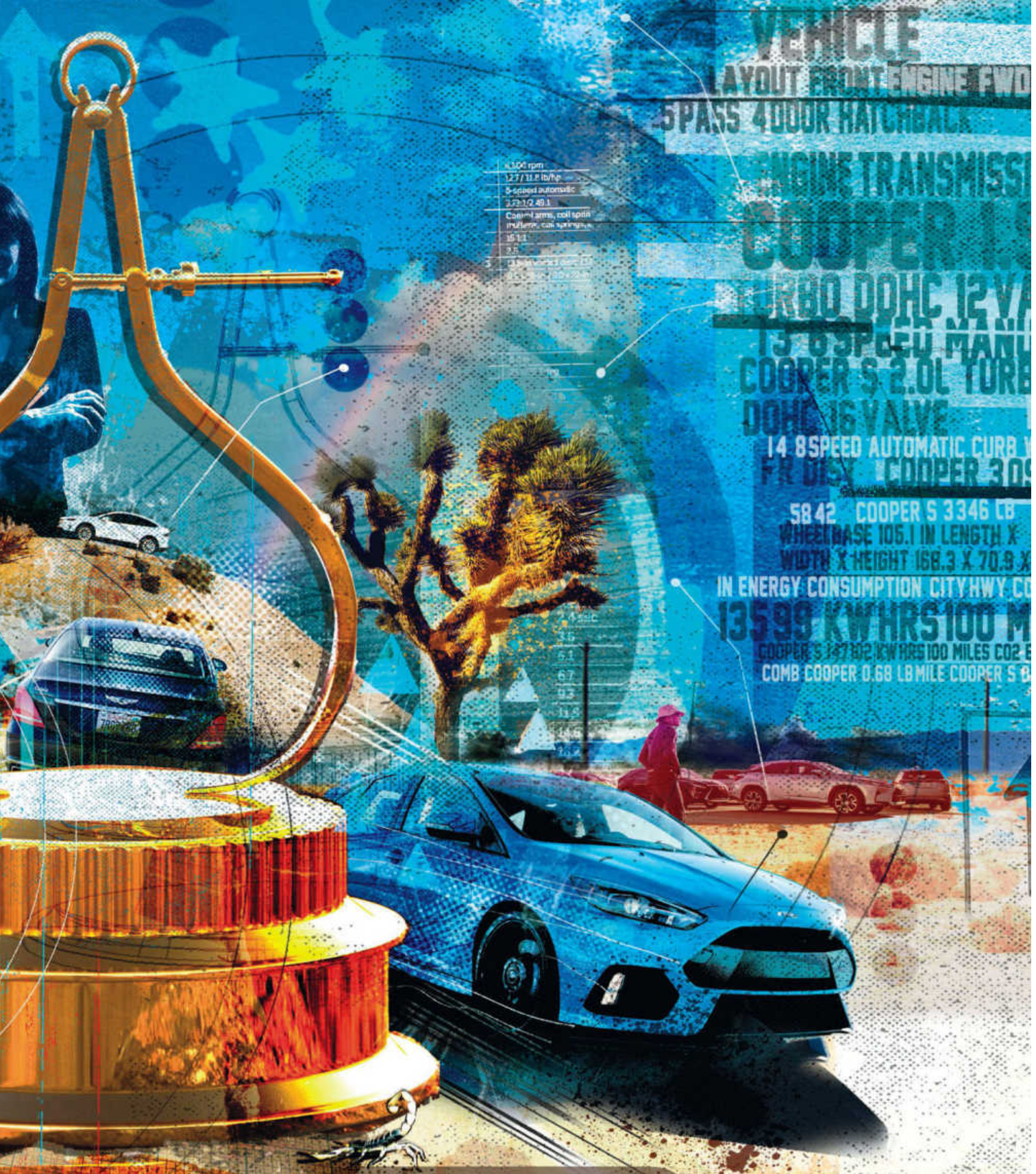
ALL-NEW
RIDGELINE

Ridgeline RTL-E shown. ©2016 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

MOTOR TREND AWARDS

Illustration Tim Marrs

Here's the further ado. You're going to be transported into the biggest and most comprehensive vehicle evaluations in the industry. All contenders are judged against our six criteria. These allow us to evaluate entry-level econoboxes against six-figure luxury whips and everything in between. They are key to what we do. In addition to the criteria-based reviews, we're also giving you a peek behind the curtain. Do you need to know how the sausage is made, or would you rather just find out who wins what? Either way, all that's left for you is to turn the page.


VEHICLE
LAYOUT FRONT ENGINE FWD
5 PASS 4 DOOR HATCHBACK
ENGINE TRANSMISSI
COOPER
TURBO DOHC 12 VA
COOPER S 2.0L TURB
DOHC 16 VALVE
14 8SPEED AUTOMATIC CURB
58 42 COOPER S 3346 LB
WHEELBASE 106.1 IN LENGTH X
WIDTH X HEIGHT 168.3 X 70.9 X
IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION CITY HWY C
13599 KWHRS100 M
COOPER S 187302 KW HRS 100 MILES CO2
COMB COOPER 0.68 LB MILE COOPER S

THE CRITERIA

ADVANCEMENT IN DESIGN

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

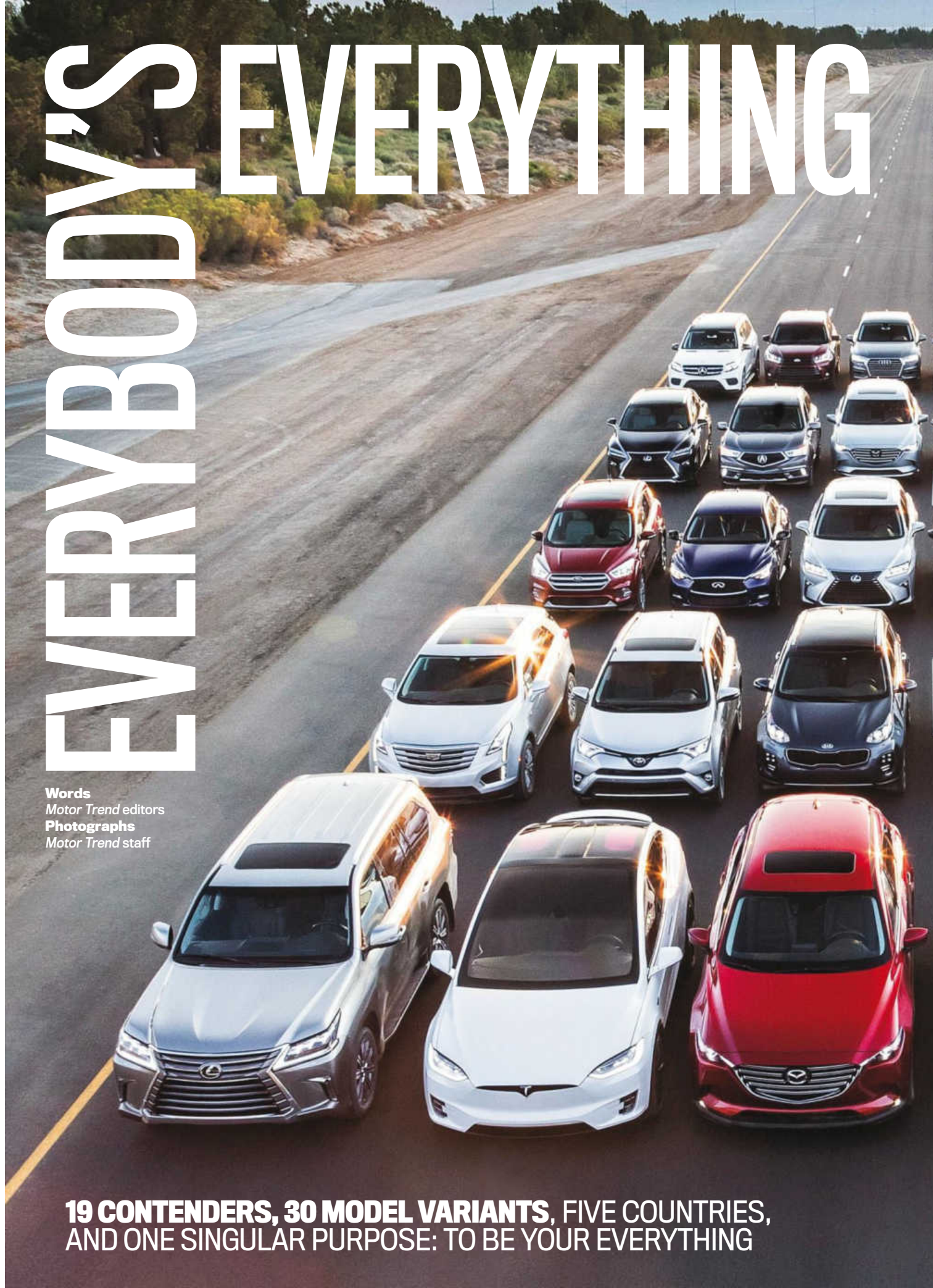
PERFORMANCE OF INTENDED FUNCTION

EFFICIENCY

SAFETY

VALUE

EVERYBODY'S EVERYTHING



Words
Motor Trend editors
Photographs
Motor Trend staff

19 CONTENDERS, 30 MODEL VARIANTS, FIVE COUNTRIES, AND ONE SINGULAR PURPOSE: TO BE YOUR EVERYTHING

THE JUDGES

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Scott Evans
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Jonny Lieberman
Senior features editor
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International bureau chief
Frank Markus
Technical director
Alisa Priddle
Detroit editor
Mark Rechtin
Executive editor
Christian Seabaugh
Associate editor
Chris Walton
Road test editor

THE LINEUP Acura MDX ■ Audi Q7 ■ BMW X1 ■ Cadillac XT5 ■ Ford Escape ■ GMC Acadia ■ Infiniti QX30 ■ Jaguar F-Pace ■ Kia Sportage ■ Lexus LX 570 ■ Lexus RX ■ Mazda CX-9 ■ Mercedes-Benz GLC-Class ■ Mercedes-Benz GLS-Class ■ Nissan Armada ■ Tesla Model X ■ Toyota Highlander ■ Toyota Land Cruiser ■ Toyota RAV4

SUV of the Year Testing

It should come as little surprise that a group of vehicles devised, engineered, and intended for an array of uses by a diverse motoring public would come in a variety of sizes, shapes, powertrains, and prices. The SUV has, whether we like it or not, become the do-everything vehicle for the American consumer. This is what makes this contest, more than Car or Truck of the Year, the most difficult to judge. From frugal two-box runabouts and a tall, zippy hatchback to seven-passenger people haulers, foul-weather adventure mobiles, and no-compromises rock-crawlers, this year's 2017 SUV of the Year contest spreads its net farther than any previous competition we can recall.

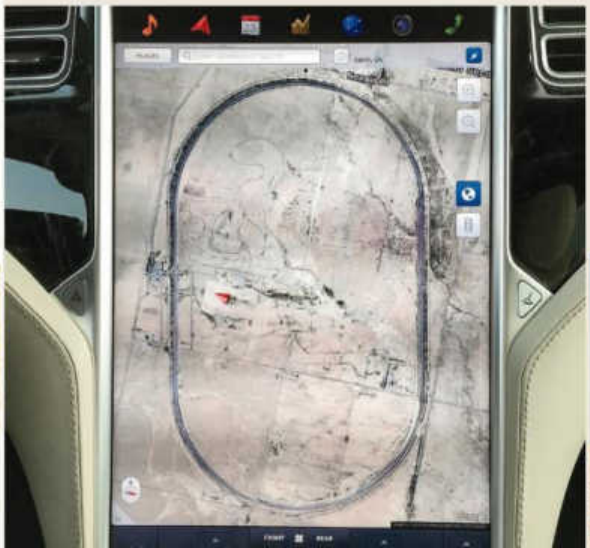
Brands hailing from England (1), Japan (9), Germany (4), Korea (1), and the U.S. (4), these 19 international contenders were represented by 30 model variants. Base prices ranged from just over $24,000 up to a whisker under $127,000. Powertrains ranged from a 1.5-liter four-cylinder to a 5.7-liter V-8. Naturally aspirated, turbocharged, twin-turbo, supercharged, gas/electric hybrid, and pure electric motors put their motivation through front-wheel drive, all-wheel drive, and four-wheel-drive drivetrains. Horsepower varied from 168 to an electric equivalent of 532, with EPA highway fuel economy numbers stretching from 95 mpg-e down to 18 mpg.

With so many interpretations of this vehicle type, how could we possibly pick a single 2017 *Motor Trend* SUV of the Year?

Each contender first underwent our usual battery of instrumented tests to quantify its on-road performance. During this three-week period, our in-house Real MPG lab measured on-road fuel economy to gauge true efficiency. Next, along with 11 judges and an army of support staff, photographers, and video operators totaling about 30 people, all contenders traveled to Honda Proving Center of

PHASE 1 THE PERFORMANCE TEST

We put each SUV through the usual battery of instrumented tests at our Auto Club Speedway test facility. Utilizing "mil-spec" satellite GPS, our Vbox data-acquisition equipment measured 0–60 and quarter-mile acceleration, 60–0 braking, and lateral-acceleration. It also generated a best lap time through our dynamic figure-eight test. We then generated a spreadsheet with all the contenders' performances listed against peers in our database dating back 20 years. Meanwhile, our Real MPG team attached highly sensitive instruments to measure and quantify city, highway, and combined Real MPG fuel economy results.



PHASE 2 THE PROVING GROUNDS

This year, we enlisted the help of American Honda Motor Company to use their recently renovated Honda Proving Center of California. Located in the high desert near Mojave, HPCC has nearly completed a $25 million refurbishment, including a billiard table–smooth 7.5-mile oval and a 1-mile offshoot that precisely replicates the notoriously choppy 110 freeway in Southern California. Here, we evaluated merging, wind/road noise at various speeds, ride quality, lane keeping warning/assist systems, and adaptive

MORE THAN A TOY Proving it's not a novelty, the Tesla Model X shows off its off-road chops.

cruise controls if so equipped. On a 2.2-mile winding road, we evaluated each SUV's steering, engine, transmission, suspension, and brake system calibrations on a variety of rising, falling, on/off-camber, and steady and decreasing-radius corners. For off-road testing, Honda prepared a loose-gravel road loop and maintained a half-mile course consisting of deep silt, packed dirt, numerous dips and bumps, side inclines, and a steep 50 percent incline/descent. During these two days of testing, every SUV also endured a thorough poking and prodding of their interiors' ingress and egress, seating accommodations, packaging, materials and build quality, audio systems, cargo areas, and so on. At the end of Phase 2, the judges cut the list from 19 SUVs down to six finalists.

PHASE 3 THE LOOP

After two days on a 27.6-mile loop in Tehachapi, we locked ourselves in a conference room to determine the 2017 *Motor Trend* SUV of the Year.

See page 119 for more on the Tehachapi loop.

California, where they were subjected to an exhaustive back-to-back-to-back round-robin of controlled, closed-circuit evaluations. These exercises included but were not limited to tests of noise/vibration/harshness, ride quality, limit handling, off-road ability, semi- and full-autonomous driving features, special surface capability, and—as the Mojave desert facility would dictate—high-temperature operation and high-wind susceptibility. This round of evaluations produced our short list of six finalists, which were then driven on an established 27.6-mile loop in and around Tehachapi, California, to determine a rank order from sixth place up to our winner.

Keep in mind we don't compare apples to bowling balls. Each contender was evaluated relative to its peers within its self-said segment, with six criteria in mind. We evaluate how much the exterior and interior designs advance or innovate, the vehicle's relative value considering both price and options, whether it accomplishes a stated or implied function/mission, how efficient the powertrains are and the relative size of the carbon footprint produced, the active/passive safety equipment and official test results, and the engineering involved. Finally, we look for clever packaging or materials solutions that benefit the consumer.

Without further ado, let us introduce you to this year's diverse 2017 SUV of the Year contestants. **Chris Walton**

Acura MDX

We Like: The smooth ride and its responsiveness when driven hard. **We Don't Like:** Fussy transmission selector and dual-stack display.

For the mid-cycle refresh of its flagship three-row SUV, Acura clipped the chrome beak, added captain's chairs and more premium leather and wood to the cabin, and enhanced a host of safety and technology upgrades.

Nearly every judge called out the MDX's quiet, well-damped ride, particularly on the bumpy replica of L.A.'s 110 freeway.

We also appreciated how Acura's Super Handling All Wheel Drive system responded well when driven firmly, but Cammisa questioned the need for torque-vectoring AWD in a soccer-mom hauler. "Sure, it's great when you're pushing the limit," he said, "but is it really necessary?"

At lower speeds, some judges were put off by the "herky-jerky" response of the nine-speed transmission. Others had issues with the inconsistent "ping-ponging" performance of the MDX's lane keep assist system, the cornerstone of the updated AcuraWatch safety and driver-assistance suite. And the array of buttons for cruise control, lane keeping, and infotainment controls are "indecipherable," Rechtin noted.

Lieberman rated the new-look MDX highly against the design criteria, but others saw the subtle styling tweaks as a missed opportunity. Priddle found the interior upgrades to be more premium than outright luxurious. All were impressed by a plethora of power points, ranging from 1.0- and 2.5-amp USB to 100- and 180-watt 12-volt outlets.

Acura's substantial refresh of the MDX makes it a solid player in its category, but not against our six criteria. As such, it's not the standout SUV for 2017. **EL**

SPECS Acura MDX SH-AWD (Advance)	
Base Price/As Tested	**$57,340**/$57,340
Power (SAE net)	**290 hp** @ 6,200 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**267 lb-ft** @ 4,700 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.2 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.7 sec** @ 94.6 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.0 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**19/26/22 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 6-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.5L SOHC 24-valve V-6/9-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,222 lb (58/42%) **WHEELBASE** 111.0 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 196.2 x 77.2 x 67.6 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 177/130 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.90 lb/mile

Behind the scenes What ha' happen was ...

On the preceding pages, Chris Walton introduced the contestants, the methodology, the judges, and the weather. But he forgot to introduce you to Pinch.

We were warned about Pinch when we first arrived at Honda Proving Center of California. Don't leave your bags on the ground, they cautioned us. Pinch will rummage through them. Watch where you step, or Pinch might get you in the ankle. Don't sit on the ground, either, because Pinch will sting you in the hiney.

Pinch, by the way, is a scorpion. And although we only met him once during our two days at HPCC, we knew he was everywhere, watching everything. He had a CB radio, apparently. And a radar gun, too. Because he ratted me out for doing

PINCH Our little friend the scorpion watched every move we made. Stalker.

BMW X1

We Like: The translation of BMW styling; tons of interior space. **We Don't Like:** The narrow, flat front seats; chassis with an identity crisis.

The BMW X1 was easily the most controversial vehicle of the test. No other SUV or crossover provoked more argument or more polarized opinions. What one judge loved, the next hated. More time was spent debating whether the Mini-based X1 was finalist-worthy than any other contender, and it eventually missed the cut by the slimmest of margins.

Loh and Priddle thought it handsome. MacKenzie and Evans disagreed. Markus thought the interior looked rich. Cammisa and Seabaugh felt like it was full of cheap plastic. Walton and Cammisa liked the handling. Most everyone else was unimpressed. Walton liked the steering feel. Seabaugh described it as a "Mini steering box on novocaine." Seabaugh and Evans were unimpressed with the cargo space, but the rest found it reasonably large for the class.

There were some areas we (mostly) agreed on. Everyone but Seabaugh thought the rear seat was surprisingly spacious for a compact crossover. We agreed that the X1 comported itself on our off-road loop but that its ride over rough pavement was rather flinty.

The powertrain got mostly high marks, although Rechtin encountered a few bad shifts and Markus thought the Sport mode could use work. Loh and Markus also remarked on how quiet the interior was at freeway speeds.

In all, we found the X1 confusing and unsure of itself. Is it a proper BMW? A Mini by way of Savile Row? Is it a nice little luxury crossover or badge engineering gone awry? One thing we could agree on: There was no consensus to advance it to the finals. **SE**

SPECS 2016 BMW X1 xDrive28i

Base Price/As Tested	**$36,095**/$42,895
Power (SAE net)	**228 hp** @ 5,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**258 lb-ft** @ 1,450 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.8 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.2 sec** @ 90.5 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**122 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.85 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.8 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**22/32/26 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,708 lb (57/43%) **WHEELBASE** 105.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 175.4 x 71.7 x 62.9 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 153/105 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.76 lb/mile

109 mph in a Mazda CX-9 on the high-speed oval.

We were supposed to keep our speeds under 75 mph. But I was, I swear, speeding in the name of science. The Mazda's outside temperature display was stuck at 79 degrees Fahrenheit, its computer in clear disbelief of the actual ambient air temperature—which was more than a scorching 110. It didn't matter that it was a dry heat;

BIPOLAR Calm-as-a-cucumber Walton and incredulous-Italian Cammisa share their love for Excel data.

Cadillac XT5

We Like: The sharp handling and smooth ride. **We Don't Like:** Its underwhelming powertrain, balky infotainment, and unintuitive shifter.

Platinum

Although an improvement over the departing SRX, the Cadillac XT5 doesn't deliver on its sporting pretense.

Our testers found the V-6 coarse and its sleepy transmission's gears too widely spaced. The lack of accelerative chutzpah feels out of place with the sharp steering and good handling balance on winding roads. But we wonder how many luxury SUV buyers desire such a dynamic chassis setup—especially when accompanied by the overly tight seat-belt hug when stability control intervenes.

As for ride, the XT5 aced the crumbling-freeway test. Cammisa described it as the best of any SUV in the test: "Hands down. The surface ripples were just ... gone."

Off-road, the XT5 was merely competent in both FWD and AWD versions. Walton found both versions bogged down when the dirt turned to silt, and the FWD version stalled after Markus struck a sharp bump.

Inside, the XT5 suffers from inconsistency. The Luxury version is plasticky, and the Platinum trim's wood and suede environment felt "particularly stylish ... like a lady's shoe," Seabaugh said. Second-row headroom is a bit tight.

Complaints about the GM monostable gearshift were rife, with testers calling it "finicky" and "unintuitive." Despite some usability improvements, the balky CUE infotainment system is still aggravating to use, and the headache-inducing rearview-mirror camera was panned as mere gadgetry.

"I've come to expect more from a modern Cadillac," Evans concluded, "so I find myself a little let down by this one." **MR**

Luxury
REAL MPG 17/27/20

SPECS 2017 Cadillac XT5 3.6 (Luxury)		XT5 AWD 3.6 (Platinum)
Base Price/As Tested	**$45,890**/$48,935	**$63,495**/$63,845
Power (SAE net)	**310 hp** @ 6,700 rpm*	**310 hp** @ 6,700 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	**271 lb-ft** @ 5,000 rpm*	**271 lb-ft** @ 5,000 rpm*
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.4 sec**	**6.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.0 sec** @ 91.4 mph	**15.1 sec** @ 92.6 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**128 ft**	**111 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.81 g** (avg)	**0.82 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.0 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)	**27.1 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**19/27/22 mpg**	**18/26/21 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT **LUXURY** Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **PLATINUM** Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION 3.6L DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist)** **LUXURY** 4,075 lb (60/40%) **PLATINUM** 4,333 lb (58/42%) **WHEELBASE** 112.5 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 189.5 x 75.0 x 66.0 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** **LUXURY** 177/125 kW-hrs/100 miles **PLATINUM** 187/130 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** **LUXURY** 0.88 lb/mile **PLATINUM** 0.93 lb/mile

*SAE certified

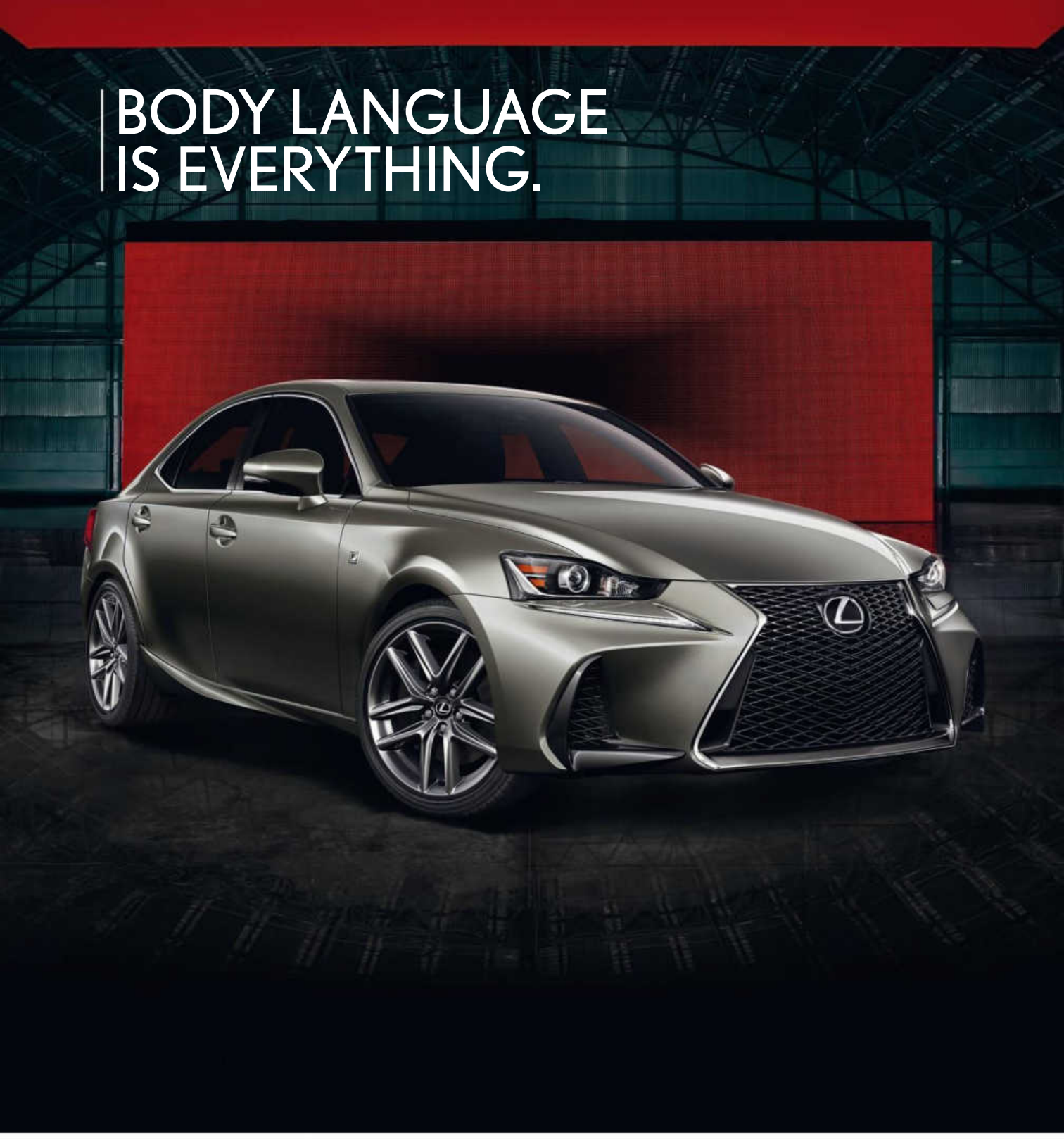
the Mazda didn't like it. I could hear fluttering sounds coming from the engine compartment as the computer dumped boost to preserve the engine. The CX-9 was gutless.

After a cooldown lap of the 7.5-mile oval, I switched off traction control and tried a full-throttle launch. The power had returned, and the front-drive CX-9 spun its tires through first gear, halfway through second, and pulled hard until the middle of third, at which point the boost once again started to drop off. I kept my foot in it to see what would happen, and I backed off only when I was convinced that—even though the computer was clearly reducing engine power—no warning lights would illuminate. Apparently, it took until 109 mph to satisfy me.

TOUGH JOB **Hustling through dirt is a crash course in suspension, chassis, and cooling systems.**

In my notebook, I dinged the Mazda for its distaste of the heat but then gave

BODY LANGUAGE IS EVERYTHING.



THE OUTSPOKEN NEW 2017 IS

An aggressive stance. A powerful look. An undeniable presence. Often the things we don't say speak the loudest. The new 2017 Lexus IS F SPORT makes a statement even before you start the engine. Its strong lines, sculpted LED headlamps and bold grille are matched by sporty performance and a dynamic driving experience. The IS 350, IS AWD and IS Turbo prove that some of the most powerful statements don't need words at all.

LEXUS

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Options shown. ©2016 Lexus

Ford Escape

We Like: Its well-sorted chassis dynamics and wide model range. **We Don't Like:** The dated interior styling and marginal off-road abilities.

SE EcoBoost

The increasingly popular compact-crossover segment is making things tough at Ford. Even with this year's revised exterior styling, minor interior revisions (cupholders with "fingers"), a newly available 1.5-liter turbo-four, and a modified 2.0-liter turbo-four with a bit more output, the Escape is just hanging in there. Lane keep assist, a driver drowsiness monitor, and adaptive cruise with forward collision alert plus auto brake-boost are now available—but those innovations aren't all that novel. Indeed, a 2017 Escape SE AWD's sixth-place finish (out of nine entrants) in our recent Big Test comparison was the harbinger of how it would fare in this tougher contest.

It's not all bad news. Juror after juror complimented the Escape's finely tuned suspension and precise steering, from the base S trim to the top-tier Titanium. "Ford's chassis excellence shines through, even on this base model," Cammisa said. In choosing a powertrain, you (mostly) get what you pay for, the 2.0-liter EcoBoost proving the drivers' favorite. The new fuel economy–minded 1.5-liter turbocharged I-4 topped our Real MPG results but didn't quite show its 11-horsepower advantage over the base 2.5-liter engine.

Inside, the once-extreme styling is showing its age where the "angles and buttons all over the place" get in the way of function. Ford's first application of Sync 3 also adds Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, but it is still housed in what Markus calls "a Stormtrooper helmet." MacKenzie said it best: "Ford needs its entry in the white-hot small SUV sector to be class-leading in every respect, and the Escape isn't." **CW**

Titanium
REAL MPG 23/30/26

SPECS	2017 Ford Escape (S)	Ford Escape SE EcoBoost	Ford Escape EcoBoost 4WD Titanium
Base Price/As Tested	**$24,495**/$24,495	**$25,995**/$31,470	**$31,745**/$39,010
Power (SAE net)	**168 hp** @ 6,000 rpm	**179 hp** @ 6,000 rpm	**245 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**170 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm	**177 lb-ft** @ 2,500 rpm	**275 lb-ft** @ 3,000 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**9.1 sec**	**9.2 sec**	**7.3 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.9 sec** @ 80.9 mph	**16.9 sec** @ 80.9 mph	**15.7 sec** @ 85.0 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**120 ft**	**126 ft**	**125 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.81 g** (avg)	**0.82 g** (avg)	**0.80 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.3 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)	**27.9 sec** @ 0.59 g (avg)	**28.2 sec** @ 0.57 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**21/29/24 mpg**	**23/30/26 mpg**	**20/27/23 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT S, SE Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **TITANIUM** Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION S** 2.5L DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **SE** 1.5L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **TITANIUM** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) S** 3,486 lb (59/41%) **SE** 3,598 lb (58/42%) **TITANIUM** 3,868 lb (58/42%) **WHEELBASE** 105.9 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 178.1 x 72.4 x 66.3 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY S** 160/116 kW-hrs/100 miles **SE** 147/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **TITANIUM** 169/125 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS S** 0.81 lb/mile **SE** 0.75 lb/mile **TITANIUM** 0.86 lb/mile

it partial credit for at least thermally protecting itself.

The beauty of having so many judges is that we each bring our respective neuroses to the table. I tend to focus on powertrain, handling balance, and suspension compliance. Every time I saw Frank Markus, he was dictating to Siri how many tie-down hooks, 12-volt power outlets, and spare tires were present in some cargo area. Ed Loh seemed to be furiously tapping on every car's touchscreen, Scott Evans was complaining about head toss, Mark Rechtin was evaluating rear-seat packaging, and Alisa Priddle was metering ride quality on the 110 freeway replica.

Then there was Jonny Lieberman, who was most often on the 50 percent incline with vehicles that would never, ever do such a thing in real life. That made for awesome photos.

HEY, SIRI Frank Markus dictates his vehicle notes to Siri. They're mostly unusable.

DANIEL STEIGER

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Infiniti QX30

We Like: The looks, inside and out, plus the way it drives. **We Don't Like:** It's neither an SUV nor an Infiniti.

There are two big reasons why the Infiniti QX30 is not our 2017 SUV of the Year. One, it's not even close to being an SUV; it's a lifted hatchback. Two, it's not an Infiniti.

"I pulled up next to a Lexus CT200h and was dead even in height," Evans said. "This is a hatchback with an AWD option, not a crossover." From Seabaugh: "C'mon now—this is a car."

Just because a vehicle isn't an SUV doesn't mean we can't like it. "Wow, this thing drives like the car it is," Markus said. "Nice low center of gravity, nice grippy tires, and lots of fun to throw around." See? We like the QX30.

Why might that be? Because underneath all that badging, the QX30 is a Mercedes-Benz. A GLA250 to be precise. Literally, Infiniti took the GLA's platform and wrapped some Shiro Nakamura–approved sheetmetal around it. The engine is the same transverse turbo 2.0-liter I-4 you'll find in several Mercedes products. Same for the seven-speed dual-clutch transmission; it's the same as the Benz.

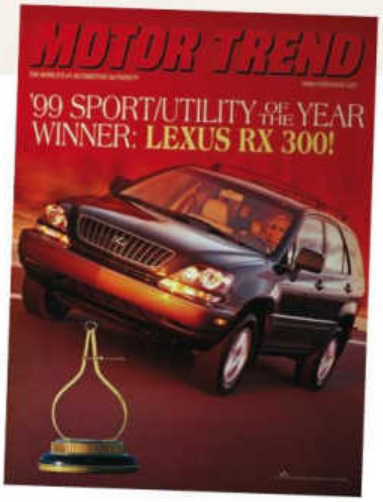
At least it looks good. Cammisa called it a "pretty little hot hatch with an interior nicer than the BMW X1's," and we all mostly agree. In fact, both the exterior and the interior look better than the GLA the QX30 is based on—although back-seat space in the Infiniti definitely gets a failing grade.

MacKenzie called it "a clever and visually arresting re-skin." But he also said that "that means beyond executing the sheetmetal, any fundamental engineering excellence is Daimler's, not Nissan's." And by Nissan, MacKenzie meant Infiniti. You see the problem? **JL**

SPECS	2017 Infiniti QX30S 2.0t
Base Price/As Tested	$39,495/$43,195
Power (SAE net)	208 hp @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	258 lb-ft @ 1,200 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	6.3 sec
Quarter Mile	14.9 sec @ 93.7 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	106 ft
Lateral Acceleration	0.88 g (avg)
MT Figure Eight	26.1 sec @ 0.71 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	24/33/27 mpg (mfr est)

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/7-speed twin-clutch auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,330 lb (62/38%) **WHEELBASE** 106.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 174.2 x 71.1 x 58.1 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 140/102 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.71 lb/mile

The cynic in me would love to dismiss the very idea of an SUV of the Year award. After all, *Motor Trend* didn't give out an award for Station Wagon of the Year in the 1970s or Minivan of the Year in the 1980s, when those body styles were the dominant family haulers. On the other hand, neither category seemed to dominate the market with subcompact to full-size versions at every price point like SUVs have. And the crossover, well, crosses over so many different categories. In this group, we have performance SUVs, family SUVs, compact SUVs, hybrid SUVs, luxury SUVs, SUVs from the future with gullwing doors, amazing SUVs, disappointing SUVs, and ultimately, the winning SUV. But there's one thing all of these vehicles have in common, and that's being a daily driver SUV. So it was important



GENESIS It all started here–back when we had no idea SUV of the Year would rival COTY.

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Kia Sportage

We Like: Its elegant, youthful body. **We Don't Like:** That those looks only run skin deep.

SUV OF THE YEAR

FE

Many of this year's competitors elicited passionate responses from our staffers—positive and negative. Perhaps the biggest disappointment with this new Kia is that it garnered neither. Reading through the notebook entries, there's one common theme: This is a forgettable vehicle.

That's surprising given the handsome exterior styling. There's some dissent about whether it looks better than the previous Sportage, but both are high-water marks in a class of crossovers designed to look like washing machines. The interior is also inoffensive in its simplicity, although one editor accused it of being retrograde.

The base 2.4-liter's off-the-line acceleration is adequate—in fact, the 181-hp front-drive 2.4-liter beats the 237-hp AWD 2.0-liter turbo's run to 60 mph, thanks in part to short, closely spaced first and second gears. Unfortunately, it's a big leap to its tall third cog, leaving the Sportage feeling lethargic in high-speed passing maneuvers.

On the plus side, the Kia's driving position is better than the Toyota RAV4, its spacious rear seat reclines, and the lane keep assist cleverly beeps through the speakers on whichever side of the car is coming close to the lane markings. But the highest marks came after sliding it around our dirt-road course, where many of us loved the Sportage's playful demeanor. Driven in normal conditions, though, Lieberman griped that it's "about as much fun as a bowl of Grape-Nuts."

With no glaring shortcomings or brilliant wins, the Sportage's most prominent feature in this group is its distinct lack of personality. **JC**

SX
REAL MPG 22/26/24

SPECS	2017 Kia Sportage FE (LX)	Kia Sportage SX T-GDI AWD
Base Price/As Tested	**$23,885**/$25,885	**$34,895**/$34,895
Power (SAE net)	**181 hp** @ 6,000 rpm	**237 hp** @ 6,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**175 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm	**260 lb-ft** @ 1,450 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**8.0 sec**	**8.1 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.3 sec** @ 86.4 mph	**16.2 sec** @ 86.4 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**118 ft**	**118 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.81 g** (avg)	**0.83 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.8 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)	**26.8 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**23/30/26 mpg**	**20/23/21 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT FE Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **SX** Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION FE** 2.4L DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **SX** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) FE** 3,291 lb (61/39%) **SX** 3,750 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE** 105.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT FE** 176.4 x 73.0 x 64.4 in **SX** 176.4 x 73.0 x 65.2 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY FE** 147/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **SX** 169/147 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB FE** 0.75 lb/mile **SX** 0.91 lb/mile

GOING TO THE BANK
The off-road section was supposed to be low-speed, but who could resist sliding around a banked curve like this one? Not us.

that each of our diverse group of judges had a my-priorities-are-different-than-yours viewpoint.

One of those different priorities came from new guest judge Mike Accavitti. He was evaluating things from the perspective of a real buyer. Accavitti was most recently the general manager of the Acura brand, a position he ascended to after decades of marketing and product-planning positions in Detroit.

Lexus LX 570

We Like: Its swanky materials, tons of features, and unstoppable off-road ability. **We Don't Like:** The infuriating infotainment controller.

Many of us have a soft spot for old-school body-on-frame SUVs, but we found ourselves torn regarding the Lexus LX 570. The problem: The Toyota Land Cruiser sitting right next to it. It seemed that for every two steps the Lexus took ahead of the Land Cruiser it's based on, the LX took two steps right back.

Take, for example, the interior. It earned praise for premium materials and impressive differentiation from the Toyota. Loh was impressed with the heated and cooled rear seats, a singular feature in this field. On the other hand, no one particularly liked the design of the interior, and we all agreed the mouselike infotainment controller was an unmitigated deal-breaker.

Then there's the LX 570's big party trick, its hydraulic suspension. Here the judges were divided. Lieberman, Cammisa, and Rechtin thought it rode better, especially off-road, but Priddle, Markus, and Evans couldn't tell the difference from the Toyota. Regardless, the promised benefits of the fancy suspenders fall apart when you realize the Lexus body kit ruins the approach and departure angles. And Walton noted that on winding roads, "it feels like a relic—floppy and soggy."

There's also the matter of the Land Cruiser issues that the LX 570 didn't fix: the lazy transmission programming, the abysmal fuel economy, and the second-row seats that dance the jitterbug when the ride gets rough.

Although the Lexus doesn't carry much of a price premium over the Land Cruiser, we all agreed we'd rather have the Toyota—which means the LX 570 couldn't be a finalist. **SE**

SPECS	2016 Lexus LX 570
Base Price/As Tested	$89,855/$97,605
Power (SAE net)	383 hp @ 5,600 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	403 lb-ft @ 3,600 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	7.3 sec
Quarter Mile	15.6 sec @ 89.9 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	118 ft
Lateral Acceleration	0.76 g (avg)
MT Figure Eight	28.2 sec @ 0.61 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	13/18/15 mpg

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 8-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 5.7L DOHC 32-valve V-8/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 6,230 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 112.2 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 199.4 x 78.0 x 73.4 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 259/187 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 1.31 lb/mile

So his observations tended to be more gestalt—does each SUV, as a whole, meet the expectations of the consumers who actually buy these things?

This is in stark contrast to Jonny, whose praise demonstrated a perfect negative correlation to sales figures. Toyota sells more Highlanders in a week than it does Land Cruisers in a year, yet Jonny declared the latter to be the best truck in the world. He was so impressed with how well it climbed the hill. Then he blew a gasket upon hearing general praise for the Highlander.

No actual gaskets were blown in the high heat, thankfully, but one contender did throw a vehicular temper tantrum. First, the Model X remotely slammed one of its front doors into the slab-sided Audi Q7, possibly out of brand jealousy. Then, while opening one of its rear falcon

BROKEN WING The Tesla promptly rips a piece of its own trim off while showing off its falcon-wing doors.

Lexus RX

We Like: The buttery-smooth hybrid. **We Don't Like:** The cow-catcher front grille and button-bomb interior.

RX 350 F-Sport

The RX is Lexus' cash cow, which might be why the automaker erred toward caution with its redesign. Although the sheetmetal—including the polarizing Predator grille—and the interior design are both new, under its skin the fourth-generation RX sports a chassis dating back to the Clinton administration and a powertrain not much younger than that.

It shows, too. The chassis of both our V-6-powered RX 350 and hybrid RX 450h proved themselves to be unrefined and rattle-prone over gravel roads and poorly maintained freeways. "The shocks are rock hard," Evans said, "and the body control isn't any better."

The powertrains proved to be hit and miss. Our RX 350 tester, a pseudo-sporty F Sport model that features a slightly stiffer suspension and revised transmission tuning, didn't feel particularly sporty during our evaluations, the eight-speed's constant gear-hunting a particular annoyance. The RX 450h was more in line with what we've come to expect from the Lexus brand; Cammisa called it "buttery smooth."

Inside is a hodgepodge of randomly placed buttons, plastics, leather, and a mouse-based infotainment system that's a usability nightmare. The outside doesn't get much better; MacKenzie called the exterior "a brutalist mess, an amateurish mishmash of lines and surfaces dominated by an ugly, oversized grille."

The Lexus RX may have had the right stuff to earn our very first SUV of the Year title in 1999 when it redefined the segment. But a lack of advancement in engineering or design stymied the RX's chances this time around. **CS**

RX350 Fsport

SPECS	2016 Lexus RX 350 F-Sport	2016 Lexus RX 450h
Base Price/As Tested	**$50,100**/$60,010	**$53,210**/$59,290
Power (SAE net)	**295 hp** @ 6,300 rpm	**259** (gas)/165 + 67 (elec)/308 (comb) hp
Torque (SAE net)	**267 lb-ft** @ 4,700 rpm	**247** (gas)/N/A (elec)/N/A (comb) lb-ft
Accel, 0–60 mph	**6.8 sec**	**7.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.1 sec** @ 92.7 mph	**15.3 sec** @ 94.3 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**123 ft**	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.79 g** (avg)	**0.78 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.1 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)	**27.5 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**19/26/22 mpg**	**30/28/30 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** **350** 3.5L DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **450** 3.5L DOHC 24-valve V-6 +fr & rr elec/cont. variable auto **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 350** 4,533 lb (57/43%) **450** 4,796 lb (56/44%) **WHEELBASE** 109.8 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 192.5 x 74.6 x 67.7 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 350** 177/130 kW-hrs/100 miles **450** 112/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB 350** 0.90 lb/mile **450** 0.67 lb/mile

doors, the Tesla tore off a piece of its own chrome window trim. Bent it back, pulled it away, and left it there. Clearly, the vehicles were feeling the pressure.

Two days of blasting through the desert is like an Ironman competition for each of the SUVs. Will you ever need to swim 2.4 miles, bike 112 miles, and only then run a 26.2-mile marathon? Not likely. But if you're looking for a quick way to rank some uber-athletes, that, like our triathlon of events at Honda, is a great place to start.

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All these conditions were before California City switched on its cosmic hair dryer. As an afternoon breeze picked up, the scorching triple-digit heat started to seem more tolerable. Within a few minutes, though, the winds were gale force, picking up the desert sand and blasting away the first layer of sun-scorched epidermis from our faces. We

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Mercedes-Benz GLS-Class

We Like: Its independent air suspension and new infotainment screen. **We Don't Like:** That despite updates, it's long in the tooth.

GLS550

Mercedes-Benz gave the GLS-Class a major freshening for 2017 to attempt to create the S-Class of full-size SUVs. And although this is likely achievable, it will take a full redesign to get there.

That being said, this was a solid update to an old favorite—and our 2013 winner. The addition of Active Curve Control and an independent air suspension on top of light steering makes this large SUV feel half its size on a handling course. But the changes were neither extensive nor advanced enough to make it to the final round.

Performance is strong with either engine and "super smart transmission mapping," Walton said. Seabaugh noted the quick downshift from ninth to fourth at highway speeds for passing. In the dirt, Markus said, "this big girl managed to drift a little bit and zip around just as nicely as the smaller ones."

The interior benefits from the new COMAND infotainment system and "has been successfully sprinkled with a little S-Class fairy dust to give the GLS a suitably upscale ambience," MacKenzie said. But not quite enough to completely hide some carryover switchgear and plastic.

The GLS550 has a stunning interior with quilted stitching on the seats and doors and beautiful matte wood grain. We also like the power-folding third-row seats. But the spring-loaded second-row headrests were miserable.

MacKenzie's conclusion summarized our thoughts: "While its bones are still good—it delivers a great ride and performance and one of the best third rows in the entire segment—it's clear this is a vehicle nearing the end of its life cycle." **AP**

GLS550

SPECS	2017 Mercedes-Benz GLS450 4Matic	2017 Mercedes-Benz GLS550 4Matic
Base Price/As Tested	**$69,625**/$90,450	**$94,775**/$104,750
Power (SAE net)	**362 hp** @ 5,500 rpm	**449 hp** @ 5,250 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**369 lb-ft** @ 1,600 rpm	**516 lb-ft** @ 1,800 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.8 sec**	**5.6 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.4 sec** @ 96.6 mph	**14.2 sec** @ 97.6 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**120 ft**	**115 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.78 g** (avg)	**0.78 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.1 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)	**27.5 sec** @ 0.64 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**17/22/19 mpg**	**14/18/16 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** **450** 3.0L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve V-6/9-speed automatic **550** 4.7L twin-turbo DOHC 32-valve V-8/9-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist)** **450** 5,481 lb (49/51%) **550** 5,657 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 121.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 202.0 x 76.1 x 72.8 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** **450** 198/153 kW-hrs/100 miles **550** 241/187 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** **450** 1.02 lb/mile **550** 1.25 lb/mile

now understood why the west-facing side of any structure more than a foot tall was perfectly devoid of paint. People pay good money for dermabrasion. They should just hang out at the Honda Proving Center of California at sunset.

Mercifully, Pinch decided not to hitch a ride with us into town for dinner. We arrived at a local Yelp-approved restaurant, replete with pachinko-parlor lighting, but we noticed it was missing something: customers. We initially took our exclusive entrance at closing time to be a sign of good fortune—until the wine arrived. When a cabernet sauvignon arrives in a frosted glass, "sommelier" is a term best used loosely. In this case, the oenological victim was Frank, who practically retched when the "wine" touched his lips. The fluid in the glass possessed the exact color and viscosity of Redline MT-90 synthetic gear oil—and that stuff

FOOD FIGHT Our dinner remained calm. Mostly.

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Nissan Armada

We Like: That the Patrol is here (and it's a better, cheaper Infiniti QX80). **We Don't Like:** That Nissan cut all the cool off-road stuff.

Americans may be buying car-based crossovers in droves, but the classic V-8 body-on-frame SUV is still a favorite among some families. The old Titan-based Armada never made its mark, so Nissan decided to save some dough and repackage the other body-on-frame beast in its portfolio: the Patrol off-roader.

The Patrol has already been in the U.S. for some time, in the form of the luxed-up but watered-down Infiniti QX80. As far as we can tell, little separates the Armada from the QX80. The Nissan sports the same powertrain, sheetmetal (save for the nose and tail), and even interior. "I'm struggling to remember how much fancier the Infiniti version of this could possibly look," Markus said. "With white-contrast stitching and this convincing bird's-eye maple wood, this thing seems country club–ready."

Not only does the Armada look like the QX80, but it also drives like one—which is to say like a 6-year-old truck. Whereas many in the segment have managed to make their SUVs handle like cars, the Armada drives like a boat, as Evans said: "Heavy, tippy, and with slow, vague steering." At least the engine is good. "Lord have mercy," Cammisa said, "this V-8 is a brute!"

A solid value play compared to the QX80, the Armada is not a strong contender against the criteria. There's a lack of breakthrough engineering excellence. The third-row seats are tight. The second-row console doesn't fulfill its intended function. The doors don't close with the reassuring "thunk" you want from a big truck.

The Armada has improved, but it's no SUV of the Year. **CS**

SPECS 2017 Nissan Armada Platinum V8	
Base Price/As Tested	**$60,985**/$61,435
Power (SAE net)	**390 hp** @ 5,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**394 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.3 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.9 sec** @ 94.0 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**128 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.71 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.4 sec** @ 0.59 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**13/18/15 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 5.6L DOHC 32-valve V-8/7-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 5,879 lb (52/48%) **WHEELBASE** 121.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 208.9 x 79.9 x 75.8 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 259/187 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 1.31 lb/mile

tastes awful. Needless to say, we ate our dinner quickly.

We returned to Honda the next morning for our second day of hot desert driving. I finished my rounds in time to take our social media guru, Chris Bacarella, out for a few loops to show him the things we evaluate. First, we took the Audi Q7 to the dirt loop, which was a motocross course modified so that it would stress but not kill the SUVs. It began with deep sand then graduated to a severely washboarded section, a few curves, a few dips, and a long straightaway. Then there was a speed hump designed to slow us down followed by more rutted, bumpy twists, the last one long, fast, and banked.

OSHA This might not be allowed in the carpool lane.

In other words, we should have treated it like a slow driveway, yet most of us saw it as a rally stage. The Audi was spectacular. It did full-throttle four-wheel

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Toyota Highlander SE

We Like: The conservatively macho styling and clever interior packaging/storage. **We Don't Like:** Its questionable suspension and transmission tuning.

For 2017, Toyota has butched up the Highlander's exterior styling, co-opted the 2GR-FKS V-6 from the Lexus RX 350, and added a suite of standard safety features. Did all this work pay off? "The Highlander is a mix of all that's good and bad with Toyota," MacKenzie said. "Underneath a restyled body, which is one of Toyota's better recent efforts, is a platform that's old and a ride/handling compromise that's been dulled to the point of lethargy."

Part of this is due to the new-for-2017 SE's all-spring, no-damper suspension tuning, which we've witnessed in other sporty Toyota/Lexus products. Besides steering that is unnecessarily heavy, the Highlander's ride was irksome on the rough freeway stretch, where Markus remarked that it was "even jiggling my face." Another demerit came at the expense of the new V-6. Although it boasts more power and claims better overall fuel economy, its throttle programming resists acceleration until the pedal is applied in earnest. Also, the new eight-speed automatic is determined to find the highest possible gear at all times.

The best part of the Highlander appears to be what was left unchanged: its remarkably well-considered interior packaging. Abundant headroom, legroom, and cargo room are complemented by clever storage options such as the door-to-door dash-mounted shelf and a center console that Rechtin reckoned "can fit a dog or your purse—or your dog inside your purse."

Those who like the old one will love the new one. We just didn't love the Highlander enough to promote it to finalist status. **CW**

SPECS 2017 Toyota Highlander SE AWD

Base Price/As Tested	**$40,000**/$42,000 (est)
Power (SAE net)	**295 hp** @ 6,300 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**267 lb-ft** @ 4,700 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**7.2 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.5 sec** @ 92.6 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**126 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.77 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.6 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**20/26/22 mpg (est)**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.5L DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,551 lb (55/45%) **WHEELBASE** 109.8 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 192.5 x 75.8 x 68.1 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 169/130 kW-hrs/100 miles (est) **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.87lb/mile (est)

drifts, yawed predictably to Scandinavian flicks, and landed softly even after the jump, ahem, speed hump. But other SUVs did not comport themselves so effortlessly, instead bashing into their bump stops as they rattled around the course. Why is this comparison important when most of these vehicles spend little real-world time off-road? Because we now know how they would do driving through midtown Manhattan. If you've driven in

QUATTRO The Audi Q7 was one five-cylinder soundtrack short of an old rally car.

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Toyota Land Cruiser

SUV OF THE YEAR

We Like: Its unstoppable off-road capability and king-of-the-highway feel. **We Don't Like:** The tiny fuel tank and poor fuel economy.

A new eight-speed automatic transmission and electronic updates such as radar cruise control scored the Land Cruiser an invite to the party this year, where its off-road prowess won Priddle's heart by "plowing through everything in its path."

No surprise that this Serengeti tamer drew unfavorable comparisons to wildlife when on the track. "It certainly is a hippo out there on the winding road," Markus said. From MacKenzie: "It handles like a wayward water buffalo."

That said, Cammisa lauded the Cruiser for being "big, lumbering, dumb, and incredibly strong" while remaining comfortable and luxurious. Many judges would take it over its Lexus LX twin.

The Land Cruiser remains a relic of the pre-crossover era; there is no sporty handling to this body-on-frame beast. There isn't much efficiency, advancement in design, or apparent value, either. At $85,000, it's a high-priced low-volume seller that comes single-spec—meaning loaded—for the American market.

Its more unyielding global standard also means the Cruiser's strengths overseas are seen as compromises here. Consider the fold-up third-row seats, long a Land Cruiser staple and a huge packaging inefficiency that chews up storage space instead of folding away. But where paved roads are scarce, drivers will gladly trade limited storage area for the added space for ground clearance, auxiliary fuel tanks, and a full-size spare. Besides, you can always throw your stuff on the roof.

It may not be our SUV of the Year, but it's the unbreakable, unstoppable bruiser you want when the apocalypse comes. **EL**

SPECS 2016 Toyota Land Cruiser	
Base Price/As Tested	**$85,420**/$85,420
Power (SAE net)	**381 hp** @ 5,600 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**401 lb-ft** @ 3,600 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.8 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.2 sec** @ 91.2 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.75 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.8 sec** @ 0.61 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**13/18/15 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 8-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 5.7L DOHC 32-valve V-8/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 5,874 lb (52/48%) **WHEELBASE** 112.2 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 194.9 x 77.9 x 74.0 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 259/187 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 1.31 lb/mile

NYC, you know its roads are only slightly less smooth than the motocross course.

We moved on to Honda's "winding road," which isn't a racetrack; it's a perfectly paved two-lane road with a few hills and valleys. But we treated it like Twin Ring Motegi anyway. It may not be important to most people that the Jaguar F-Pace will drift through most corners like a sports car, but it did, and that added to its point count.

E-Z BRAKE
The contenders roast in the sun while waiting for judges to come abuse–err, evaluate–them.

Toyota RAV4

We Like: The RAV4 Hybrid–what took them so long? **We Don't Like:** Driving the non-Hybrid, its polarizing interior.

SE

The Toyota RAV4 has grown up from being the cute runabout when it made its debut two decades ago. Bigger and more family-oriented than before, the RAV4 finally gets a hybrid variant for the 2016 model year.

The two powertrains backdrop two quite differently behaving RAV4s. Driving the Hybrid was a pleasant surprise. Basically a Camry Hybrid drivetrain with an additional electric motor at the rear wheels, the RAV4 Hybrid "delivers genuine consumer benefit in terms of greater fuel efficiency, higher towing capacity, and—surprisingly—a better drive experience," MacKenzie said. Added Rechtin: "The fuel economy play is the main thing." For a small premium, there's much better mileage and better performance. That's a good deal.

However, the unchanged base 2.5-liter I-4 could have used some extra TLC, as various judges complained about the underpowered engine and the soggy powertrain response. Handling was also a complaint. "Low grip and plenty of body roll," Markus said.

The mid-cycle interior freshening for the RAV4 lineup was intended to make it feel more premium than before. Was it successful? Depends who you ask. "I think it feels quite high-quality in here," Loh said. "They really leveled up on interior fit and finish." Others were less convinced. "Unbelievably cheap plastic on the dash-topper," Cammisa said. "Crap feeling to the HVAC controls."

Although it's an improvement overall for the fourth-gen RAV4, ultimately the minor nip-tuck and the addition of a hybrid powertrain don't move the needle enough against the criteria. **CS**

Hybrid
REAL MPG 34/39/36

SPECS 2016 Toyota RAV4 SE		2016 Toyota RAV4 Hybrid Limited AWD-i
Base Price/As Tested	**$30,165**/$33,195	**$34,510**/$34,510
Power (SAE net)	**176 hp** @ 6,000 rpm	**150 (gas)/141 + 67 (elec)/194** (comb) hp
Torque (SAE net)	**172 lb-ft** @ 4,100 rpm	**152 (gas)/199 + 103 (elec)/N/A** (comb) lb-ft
Accel, 0–60 mph	**9.3 sec**	**8.2 sec**
Quarter Mile	**17.0 sec** @ 82.3 mph	**16.3 sec** @ 86.4 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**128 ft**	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.75 g** (avg)	**0.76 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.9 sec** @ 0.57 g (avg)	**28.1 sec** @ 0.59 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**23/30/26 mpg**	**34/31/33 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT SE Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **HYB** Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION SE** 2.5L DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **HYB** 2.5L Atkinson-cycle DOHC 16-valve I-4 + elec/cont. variable auto **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) SE** 3,587 lb (59/41%) **HYB** 3,954 lb (56/44%) **WHEELBASE** 104.7 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT SE** 181.1 x 72.6 x 65.5 in **HYB** 181.1 x 72.6 x 65.9 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY SE** 147/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **HYB** 99/109 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB SE** 0.75 lb/mile **HYB** 0.60 lb/mile

Two days of blasting through the desert is like an Ironman competition.

2017 MOTOR TREND SUV OF THE YEAR®

The Finalists ...

SIX OF ONE However you want to slice it, the half dozen SUVs that made the cut as finalists for *Motor Trend*'s 2017 SUV of the Year award are standouts among their peers. Ultimately, though, only one is able to take home the Golden Calipers.

We winnowed the field to six finalist SUVs before we selected a single winner. No surprise that each member of this half dozen is tops in its respective class—although the Tesla's in a class of one—making our ultimate decision much harder than our penultimate one.

Audi Q7

We Like: The driver interface. **We Don't Like:** The tight third-row package; the exterior design feels forced.

Premium Plus

There are many parallels between the Audi Q7 and last year's SUV of the Year winner, the Volvo XC90. The Q7, like the Swede, replaced an aged three-row crossover with a family hauler that's luxurious, innovative, and practical.

"Elegant. Clean. Quality materials throughout," Accavitti said.

Beyond the thick leather and gorgeous wood, the Q7's biggest luxury is its technology, which provides drivers with access to more information than before while reducing their workload. The extra data is displayed by Audi's revolutionary virtual cockpit, which replaces the instrument cluster with a digital screen showing satellite maps, road information, infotainment, plus the standard gauges.

"I know it's mostly Google Earth in an Audi, but I can't get over virtual cockpit," Lieberman said. The Q7's semi-autonomous radar cruise control is consistently great, but its lane keep assist only works on well-marked lanes.

In terms of layout, the Q7 is pretty strong—until you reach the third-row seats. The roomy second row slides fore and aft in three sections but is "inordinately difficult," Markus said, to fold to access the third row. Once reached, it proved to be unusable for those beyond their preteen years. "The third row is disappointing, an inexplicable packaging miss," Loh said.

As for why the Q7 isn't our SUV of the Year, it all goes back to the criteria. Others in the segment offer a more rewarding drive with better interior functionality and similar technology. "More significantly," as MacKenzie put it, "Volvo's XC90 delivers much the same sort of product concept at a much lower price." **CS**

Prestige
REAL MPG 16/26/20

SPECS	2017 Audi Q7 3.0T (Premium Plus)	2017 Audi Q7 3.0T Quattro (Prestige)
Base Price/As Tested	**$59,750**/$68,925	**$65,250**/$73,425
Power (SAE net)	**333 hp** @ 5,500 rpm	**333 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**325 lb-ft** @ 2,900 rpm	**325 lb-ft** @ 2,900 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**5.4 sec**	**5.7 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.0 sec** @ 100.2 mph	**14.3 sec** @ 97.5 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**121 ft**	**117 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)	**0.85 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.4 sec** @ 0.68 g (avg)	**26.5 sec** @ 0.67 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**19/25/21 mpg**	**19/25/21 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.0L supercharged DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) PREMIUM PLUS 4,994 lb (56/44%) **PRESTIGE** 5,103 lb (55/45%) **WHEELBASE** 117.9 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT PREMIUM PLUS 199.6 x 77.5 x 68.5 in **PRESTIGE** 199.6 x 77.5 x 67.5-70.9 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 177/135 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.91 lb/mile

The finalist round

The third day started with some gentle discussions (I say "gentle," as neither food nor chairs went flying) to whittle the group down to just six finalists. The Audi Q7, GMC Acadia, Mazda CX-9, Mercedes-Benz GLC300, Jaguar F-Pace, and Tesla Model X all impressed us enough that we brought them along for our final two days. Once settled, we bade farewell to Pinch as we headed to the high-desert town of Tehachapi.

Now it was only other motorists and police we needed to look out for. The Tehachapi loop let us drive like ordinary folks, around town, on normal two-lane roads and the freeway, listening for interior rattles and road roar over broken pavement, and noting each car's outward visibility when there are pedestrians and other cars around.

This is where we learned, for example, that the Mazda CX-9 is more on-edge than a driving instructor after 12 venti lattes. Slowing gradually for a stopped car in front, the Mazda suddenly applied full braking, mistakenly thinking it was helping to avoid a crash when in actuality it nearly caused one. At one point, I was in the Mercedes GLC and following one of the CX-9s when the Mazda screeched to a stop. Minus one point for the Mazda,

GMC Acadia All Terrain

We Like: The new size, its handling, big back seat, and cargo area. **We Don't Like:** The dozy engine and AWD select button.

We profess great admiration for the chassis of the downsized GMC Acadia and its ability to balance smooth ride and suitable handling. And because SUVs are also about livability, the All Terrain edition with its spacious second-row seat and cargo area also won us over.

That was enough love to make it a finalist. But the dozy engine and slow response of the transmission torpedoed its chances of becoming our winner—although it did get one vote.

"The new Acadia is a massive improvement on the old," Seabaugh said, calling it handsome "with a clear, unique design that screams GMC to me."

Most of us felt it outshone its platform-sharing cousin, the Cadillac XT5, with more user-friendly features, including a rear-seat reminder that chimes a warning to check that you haven't absentmindedly left behind a sleeping child.

The big engineering gaffe is the manual AWD selection knob, which makes it hard to switch modes and harder to keep track of which mode you are in. Nothing is displayed in the instrument cluster, and the symbols on the knob are hard to decipher. We envision drivers getting stuck in the snow because they forgot to switch into AWD mode. It's an inexcusable error in an era when computers can detect your terrain and engage or disengage AWD as needed.

That flaw aside, most felt the Acadia is a good remake for its target audience. Loh concluded it would be a "great long-haul highway vehicle," and Markus said, "I think I would find this to be a very livable car." **AP**

SPECS	2017 GMC Acadia All Terrain (SLT-1)
Base Price/As Tested	$44,175/$47,115
Power (SAE net)	310 hp @ 6,600 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	271 lb-ft @ 5,000 rpm*
Accel, 0–60 mph	6.7 sec
Quarter Mile	15.3 sec @ 92.6 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	126 ft
Lateral Acceleration	0.82 g (avg)
MT Figure Eight	26.9 sec @ 0.67 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	18/25/20 mpg

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.6L DOHC 24-valve V-6/6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,305 lb (57/43%) **WHEELBASE** 112.5 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 193.6 x 75.4 x 66.0 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 187/135 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.94 lb/mile

*SAE certified

REAL WORLD
Out here, we find faults that were hiding at the test track.

plus one for the Mercedes and its quick-responding brakes, and score one for Priddle in the Mazda, who picked up her CB radio and taught me how to curse with a beautiful Ontarian accent.

At the end of the two days of street loops, we locked ourselves in a conference room to make the final decision. Invariably, as we discussed each car, someone would become devil's advocate to defend its honor. It's easy to get fooled

Jaguar F-Pace

We Like: Its exterior design, the driving dynamics, and surprising off-road capability. **We Don't Like:** The amount of hard plastic inside.

S AWD

"The most important Jaguar since 1968? Or 1961?" Referencing two seminal Jaguars, the XJ sedan and E-type, Lieberman nailed the significance of the F-Pace. "Everything changes now," he added. F-Pace changes Jaguar, whose first-ever SUV looks like a global sales hit.

Jaguar engineers could have merely rebadged a Land Rover Evoque and spent their savings at the pub, but this cat is worthy of the brand's sporting legacy. It's the genuine article.

The F-Pace changes the sport-utility vehicle segment. Not only styled like a sports car, it also drives a lot like one, complete with a snarling engine and throaty exhaust note. Yet thanks to technology transferred from Jaguar's Land Rover cousins, it's surprisingly capable off-road.

The $43,385 35t AWD will be the volume seller in the U.S. with a 340-hp 3.0-liter supercharged V-6 under the hood; the S gets 40 more hp, and our $71,645 First Edition is one of 275 examples fully optioned with special leather and paint.

With designer 22-inch wheels, the S amps up the sports car sex appeal but at the expense of a brittle and noisy ride. The more modestly shod 35t has 19-inchers but still is very firmly suspended, is just as exhilarating in the twisties, and is nicer to live with every day.

The F-Pace's exterior styling and driving dynamics compensate for a disappointing interior. There's far too much hard black plastic, particularly in the 35t. "I know this is a relatively inexpensive Jaguar," Cammisa said, "but this kind of interior isn't going to invite customers back to buy another one." **AM**

35t AWD
REAL MPG 15/23/18

SPECS	2017 Jaguar F-Pace 35t AWD	2017 Jaguar F-Pace S AWD
Base Price/As Tested	**$43,385**/$48,145	**$57,695**/$71,645
Power (SAE net)	**340 hp** @ 6,500 rpm	**380 hp** @ 6,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**332 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm	**332 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.3 sec**	**5.4 sec**
Quarter Mile	**13.8 sec** @ 99.6 mph	**13.9 sec** @ 99.7 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**121 ft**	**107 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.86 g** (avg)	**0.86 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**25.9 sec** @ 0.69 g (avg)	**25.9 sec** @ 0.72 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**18/23/20 mpg**	**18/23/20 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.0L supercharged DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 35t AWD 4,305 lb (51/49%) **S** 4,481 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 113.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 186.3 x 76.2 x 65.0 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 187/147 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.97 lb/mile

into thinking you've found someone tipping his or her hand for their pick of the winner, until he or she blurts out, "Look, I'm not voting for it, I'm just saying ..." There's often a palpable feeling of relief, and we move on.

In reality, each of us should have been able to make a case for each of the finalists to win—or not win—the competition. But sometimes, you sense the discomfort building in the room. That happened as we discussed the Audi Q7. There were great arguments both for and against it, and it seemed we couldn't come to an agreement as a whole. Then Christian Seabaugh promptly ended the debate with a quick, "Sure, the Audi's great. But does anyone like it better than last year's winner, the Volvo XC90?"

Silence. One less car to fight over.

Same thing with the Tesla. Jonny pointed out that it does everything

LAST YEAR We can't stop thinking about the XC90.

Mazda CX-9

We Like: The sporty steering, rev-blipping shifts, meaty torque, and neutral chassis. **We Don't Like:** The weak AC; front-drive torque steer.

Hopes were exceptionally high for our 2008 SUV of the Year's redesign, which follows in the footsteps of several sibling comparo champs (CX-5, MX-5, Mazda6). Could the "Best Drivers' Three-row CUV" grab the calipers?

Early logbook entries from the winding track praised the CX-9's communicative steering, playful chassis dynamics, and perfectly tuned Sport mode transmission shifting, which bestows rev-matched downshift blips. On real-world curves, Evans enjoyed the way it "glides from corner to corner, attacking them like a Mazda should—fun for the whole family." Ride quality drew kudos on the gravel/Belgian block loop, as did the solid build quality and "bank-vault doors." Nearly everyone felt the design inside and out looked elegant and upscale even if it doesn't represent much "advancement." Savvy interior packaging accommodates seven actual people. Sounds like a shoo-in.

Then the desert heat began to cook our Mazdas, overtaxing the AC systems (other competitors had no such problems) and causing their turbos to lose boost. Grumbling started about a lack of places to store and recharge gear, about heavy steering feel on straight highways, and about front-drive torque steer. Overzealous auto-emergency braking startled several testers queuing at a stop. And the Real MPG test showed the front-drive CX-9 scored worse than the AWD version.

So although it may lead its class, the CX-9 doesn't outshine its peers quite as brightly as our winner does. "The real downfall of the CX-9," Lieberman said, "is the curse of expectation." **FM**

Signature
REAL MPG 19/26/21

SPECS	2016 Mazda CX-9 (Touring)	2016 Mazda CX-9 (Signature)
Base Price/As Tested	**$36,870**/$38,915	**$44,915**/$45,215
Power (SAE net)	**227 hp** @ 5,000 rpm*	**227 hp** @ 5,000 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	**310 lb-ft** @ 2,000 rpm	**310 lb-ft** @ 2,000 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**7.5 sec**	**7.4 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.9 sec** @ 87.3 mph	**15.7 sec** @ 86.1 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**130 ft**	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.79 g** (avg)	**0.82 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.6 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)	**26.7 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**22/28/25 mpg**	**21/27/23 mpg**

*250 hp with 93 octane fuel

VEHICLE LAYOUT TOURING Front-engine, FWD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV **SIGNATURE** Front-engine, AWD, 7-pass, 4-door SUV
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION 2.5L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) TOURING** 4,112 lb (56/44%)
SIGNATURE 4,317 lb (55/45%) **WHEELBASE** 115.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 199.4 x 77.2 x 67.6 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY**
TOURING 153/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **SIGNATURE** 160/125 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB TOURING** 0.80 lb/mile **SIGNATURE** 0.83 lb/mile

a Model S sedan does, only with self-destructive doors and second-row seats that don't fold. Done.

But there remained several strong candidates, so we resorted to our traditional process of a simple, anonymous paper ballot. No one forceful personality can overrule the rest in this truly egalitarian vote.

FINAL COUNT Ed tallied all the points and counterpoints.

When editor-in-chief Loh proclaimed the winner of the election, there was a collective nodding of heads and an audible, "Yep. I can live with that."

Indeed we all can. Congratulations to the 2017 SUV of the Year, which entered both the competition and the finalist round with so little fanfare but convinced us of its overall excellence. It

Tesla Model X

We Like: Experiencing futuristic Autopilot driving today. **We Don't Like:** Dystopian doors and seats and the inability to carry anything.

P90D (Ludicrous)

You're looking at what could easily have been our 2017 SUV of the Year with two simplifications: fold-flat second-row seats to allow owners to carry big stuff inside the car and traditional rear doors to permit strapping stuff to the roof.

These gadgety, form-over-function errors cost the Model X dearly in our engineering excellence and performance of intended function criteria. The power front doors and the Rube Goldberg-esque falcon-wing rear doors both proved glitchy, occasionally striking adjacent cars and once peeling off a piece of its own rear quarter-window trim. Besides neutering the vehicle's utility (prompting the quip "the U in SUV is silent here"), the mono-post seats rattle and don't adjust comfortably. They lack inboard armrests, too.

Even that big windshield, which is super cool for stargazing, turned the Tesla into a convection oven on a sunny desert day.

"Everything that makes it great can be found on the Model S," Lieberman said. "Everything that's new for the X is a gimmick or doesn't work properly 100 percent of the time."

Others were no kinder. "It's a Model S wearing a parade float wrapped in a mishmash of ideas that should've stayed on the drawing board," Evans said.

It's a crying shame. The P90D's performance makes it the Lamborghini LM002 of our day. Nearly everything else about the way one approaches, interacts with, and drives any Model X seems certain to provide a perpetual source of surprise and delight. Our advice? Easier does it with Model 3, Elon. **FM**

75D

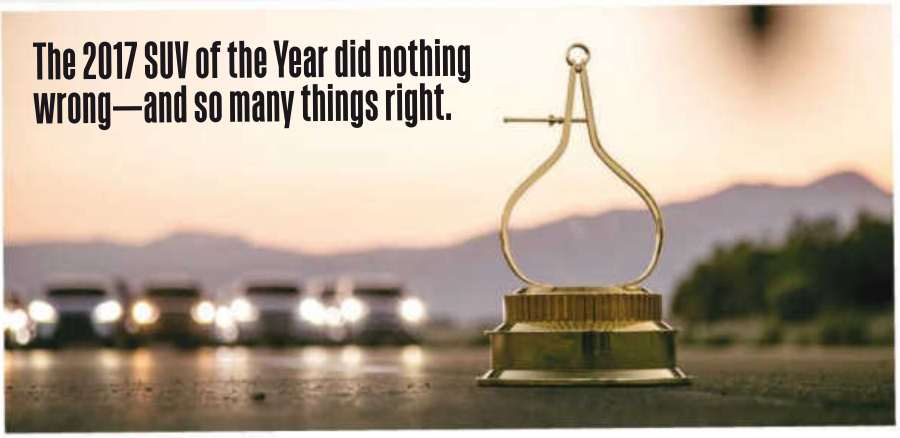
SPECS	2016 Tesla Model X 75D	2016 Tesla Model X P90D (Ludicrous)
Base Price/As Tested	**$84,200**/$95,200	**$126,700**/$135,900
Power (SAE net)	**259-hp** front, **259-hp** rear; **328-hp** comb	**259-hp** front, **503-hp** rear; **532-hp** comb
Torque (SAE net)	**244-lb-ft** front, **244-lb-ft** rear; **387-lb-ft** comb	**244-lb-ft** front, **469-lb-ft** rear; **713-lb-ft** comb
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.5 sec**	**3.2 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.1 sec** @ 100.6 mph	**11.7 sec** @ 116.0 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**113 ft**	**106 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.84 g** (avg)	**0.89 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.7 sec** @ 0.70 g (avg)	**25.1 sec** @ 0.78 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**91/95/93 mpg-e**	**89/90/89 mpg-e**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front & rear motor, AWD, 6-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** AC induction electric/1-speed auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 75D 5,178 lb (48/52%) **P90D** 5,516 lb (47/53%) **WHEELBASE** 116.7 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 198.3 x 81.5 x 65.0-67.6 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 75D 37/35 kW-hrs/100 miles **P90D** 38/37 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.00 lb/mile (at vehicle)

didn't have the Tesla's acceleration, the Jaguar's handling, the Audi's infotainment, the GMC's value, or the Mazda's feel. But other than some harsh impacts on the hideously abusive motocross track, the Mercedes-Benz GLC did nothing wrong—and so many things right.

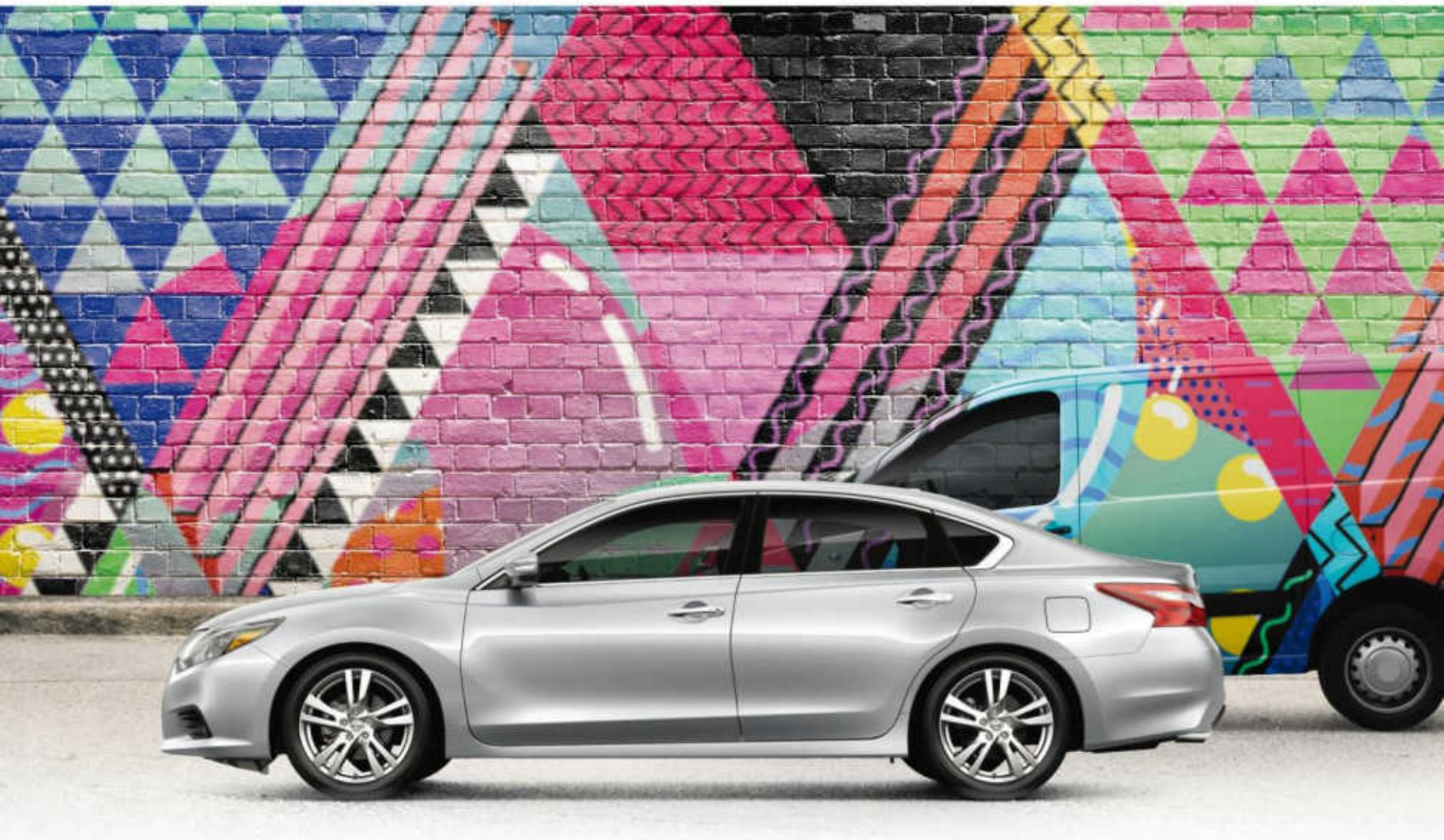
Which is more than I can say about Pinch. Next year I'll step on that little bugger if he squeals on me for speeding.

Jason Cammisa



NISSAN

Innovation that excites



YOU CAN'T SEE EVERYTHING

Fortunately, Blind Spot Warning* technology helps detect certain hard-to-see vehicles. Take on the unseen with Nissan Intelligent Safety Shield® Technologies available now on the Altima,* Sentra* and Maxima.*

*Availability dependent on model year. Blind Spot Warning is not a substitute for proper lane change procedures. The system will not prevent contact with other vehicles or accidents. It may not detect every vehicle or object around you. Always wear your seat belt, and please don't drink and drive. ©2016 Nissan North America, Inc.

SECOND TIME'S A CHARMER

GETTING A HOT SEGMENT EXACTLY RIGHT

Words Jonny Lieberman
Photographs Nathan Leach Proffer

Mercedes-Benz is no stranger to our SUV of the Year honors. The venerable Stuttgart brand has twice before taken home the Golden Calipers, once in 2007 for the three-row GL-Class and again six years later for the second-generation GL.

Interestingly, the first Mercedes-Benz SUV meant for civilians, the 1998 ML320, did not win our SUV of the Year award (principally because we hadn't thought it up yet). However, the ML320 did win our 1998 Truck of the Year award—no doubt hastening the decision to cook up an award just for SUVs. The M-Class helped usher in the luxury crossover as we know it today,

STAR IS BORN
Mercedes-Benz has never been competitive in the small premium SUV segment. Until now.

2017
MOTOR TREND SUV OF THE YEAR®

MERCEDES-BENZ GLC

so we find it fitting that the all-new GLC is the fourth SUV with a three-pointed star on its hood to take home a *Motor Trend* Of The Year award.

It couldn't come at a better time for Mercedes. Saying the crossover SUV segment is on fire isn't strong enough. Small and midsize premium SUVs have achieved critical mass while other perennially strong segments are melting down. As of August, small luxury SUV sales are up 25.4 percent compared to 2015. Also remember that because they're "premium," these little car-based runabouts are hugely profitable. Expect the GLC to provide a nice contribution to the Daimler bottom line, as Mercedes-Benz is bringing the right weapon to the right battle at precisely the right time.

Before we get to the "why" of the award, let's get to the "what" of the SUV. The GLC replaces the old GLK, the little-loved, squared-off, schnauzer-faced minute that will forever be known as the most believable character in *Sex and the City 2*. But you will forget about that old thing when you meet its much better replacement. The name has been changed from GLK to GLC to comply with Mercedes' new naming convention. It's logical if you think about it. All SUVs save for the *Bundeswehr*-prepped G-Class are prefaced with GL. The subsequent letter matches the segment it competes in; the A-Class SUV becomes the GLA, the C-Class becomes the GLC, and so forth.

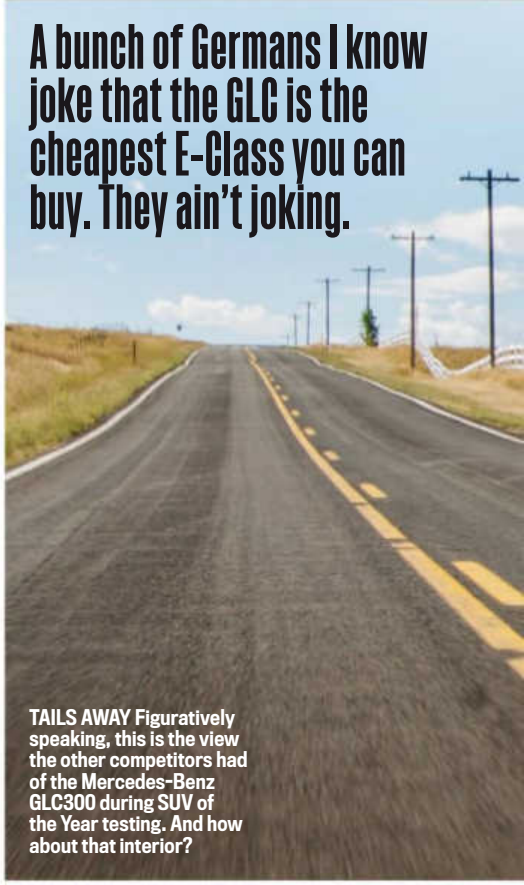
The GLC itself is a mishmash of Mercedes componentry, specifically the chassis and mechanical bits of the E-Class and the interior and electronics from the C-Class. We find this to be a particularly brilliant way to build a crossover. "One of the deciding factors for me was the decision to use the E-Class platform and C-Class features," Alisa Priddle said in explaining her vote. "That's the smart way to engineer a product."

Added guest judge Mike Accavitti: "Overall, this is a great vehicle. You know you're getting into a Mercedes as soon as you open the door to the GLC. The quality of the materials and the elegance of the design are very consistent with the Mercedes-Benz brand proposition and reputation."

The platform itself is Mercedes' clever Modular Rear Architecture platform, which will eventually underpin 10 models, including the C- and E-Class and an upcoming replacement for the defunct R-Class. The GLC's 113.1-inch wheelbase nearly splits the difference between the 111.8-inch C-Class and the 115.7-inch E-Class. The length translates primarily into rear-seat space, including extra headroom when compared to a direct competitor such as the Cadillac XT5.

As the GLC doesn't have the fancier interior of the E-Class, a bunch of Germans I know like to joke that it is the cheapest E-Class you can buy.

A bunch of Germans I know joke that the GLC is the cheapest E-Class you can buy. They ain't joking.



TAILS AWAY Figuratively speaking, this is the view the other competitors had of the Mercedes-Benz GLC300 during SUV of the Year testing. And how about that interior?

Thing is, they ain't joking. The C-Class interior is the best in its class, and most folks couldn't tell it apart from an E-Class anyway. "This thing is just nice," Christian Seabaugh said. "I hop in and immediately feel relaxed. The seats are sofa soft yet still supportive. All the touch points feel like a million bucks." Accavitti: "It's very luxurious looking with lots of leather and wood. I love how the infotainment system warns you not to be distracted by it, but then it has all these awesome screens you can't help be distracted by." Angus MacKenzie summed up the interior well: "Looks rich and upscale, like a mini S-Class. It sets the benchmark for a small luxury SUV."

We like the outside, too. Unlike the odd-duck GLK, which never resembled any other Mercedes-Benz vehicle, the GLC is design boss Gorden Wagener's great take on Mercedes' current style. "I like the way Mercedes' new design language translates to this SUV," Frank Markus said. "It has a very pleasing shape even if it doesn't set the world on fire." MacKenzie called the shape "very conservative," though Seabaugh said, "This is a very handsome trucklet. It looks almost like a Jeep Grand Cherokee from the rear three-quarter view, but it really is unmistakably Mercedes." I side with Seabaugh, inasmuch as this is the first time Mercedes' new language comes together as a unified whole. Look at the car from any angle, and it's not only clearly a GLC but also obviously a Benz.

The only version of Mercedes' not-so-small SUV we had an opportunity to review was the GLC300 4Matic. Under its hood snarls the ubiquitous M274, a 2.0-liter turbocharged inline-four that

This is the first time Mercedes' new design language comes together as a unified whole.

SPECS	Mercedes-Benz GLC300
Base Price / As Tested	**$41,875** / $60,780
Power (SAE net)	**241 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**273 lb-ft** @ 1,300 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.8 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.3 sec** @ 89.7 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**110 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)
***MT* Figure Eight**	**26.9 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**21/28/24 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door SUV **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L 241-hp/273-lb-ft DOHC 4-valve/cyl turbo I-4/9-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R DIST) 4,078 lb (53/47%) **WHEELBASE** 113.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 183.3 x 74.4 x 64.5 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 160/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS** 0.82 lb/mile

creates 241 horsepower and 273 lb-ft of torque. Power from the M274 is first routed to Mercedes' nine-speed automatic transmission before being doled out to all four wheels. Despite weighing in at 4,078 pounds, the GLC300 gets to 60 mph in a respectable 6.8 seconds and runs down the quarter mile in 15.3 seconds at 89.7 mph—though we doubt any American customer will ever ask for such thrust. "This feels very much like a V-6," Chris Walton said of the little engine's grunt, "and a good one at that." Scott Evans concurred. "Still hard to believe this is a turbo I-4," he said. "It's so quick, and the power is always there." If the GLC had a mechanical weak spot, it was the nine-speed transmission. "The transmission is generally good," Evans continued, though he did say he had a few stiff shifts that he called "out of character." MacKenzie noted the transmission could be "a touch more consistent."

But these are the occasional rough spots on a normally superlative powertrain. For the most part, we love the way the GLC300 drives. Some—like MacKenzie—weren't completely happy with the ride on the larger optional wheels. Smaller wheels featuring fatter tires would of course smooth things out. Both of our Detroit-based editors groused that this suspension setup would be hell across the mean potholes of Motown. Markus noted that the GLC had "a much more abrupt ride than the Cadillac XT5," a crossover that has presumably been tuned to deal with the weather-beaten tarmac in Detroit. There was some speculation that perhaps the front suspension got a little tweaked at the proving ground, specifically across the (unintentionally) high-speed off-road section. Was the alignment off, as Evans speculated? Walton noted that the steering wheel was cockeyed. Or, as Mark Rechtin wondered, were we just feeling the pea under the mattress? "The ride was jittery and busy," he said of driving on the jarring 110 freeway simulator, "but nothing too horrible."

Back to loving how it drives. "The first thing I notice is how quiet the cabin is," Evans said. "At low speeds there's virtually no outside noise." True, at freeway speeds there's wind noise, but the car does a great job of keeping road and tire noise out. More important, Evans noted, the GLC300 "trounces the competition" in terms of sound levels.

"The steering is beautifully fluid and nicely weighted," Evans continued. "The GLC is a much smoother and more mature corner carver than the Jaguar F-Pace, which feels darty by comparison." Walton said it was "easy to drive around town—no jumpy throttle mapping and with gentle and predictable brakes." Once

LITTLE BIG MAN
Every judge felt the small turbo engine lurking under the Mercedes-Benz GLC300's hood made more power than advertised.

on Cameron Road, Walton found himself "driving harder and harder because the GLC just feels so confident, capable, and predictable." Ed Loh, who wasn't the GLC's biggest fan at the proving ground, changed his tune in Tehachapi. And MacKenzie said it "feels like the most nimble chassis here, after the F-Pace." This is a big deal because the Jaguar is more sports car than SUV. To my senses, it seemed like a little sportiness had been baked into the Benz's chassis.

All of the above points to a very good, thoroughly thought-out SUV. To understand why we voted the GLC as this year's best, though, check out what Jason Cammisa has to say: "This is a sea change for a German luxury brand. It's the first time an SUV has been as good as or better than the equivalent price-category sedan it's based upon. Every previous SUV has been based on a sedan but hasn't been nearly as well done. The Germans considered SUV buyers to be more price-conscious (they are) and more accepting of poor quality (they are)—so the trucks were engineered to sell in big numbers. This GLC seems to have been engineered to be a good Mercedes-Benz."

That last part might just be the most important. The GLC is a smaller vehicle that feels every bit as well-honed as an E-Class, if not an S-Class. The current W205 C-Class is the first small Mercedes sedan to feel so premium; the GLC is the first small SUV.

"This is a cleverly targeted product delivering a cost-effective mix of new C-Class and E-Class technology and hardware into a red-hot market segment at a surprisingly affordable price," MacKenzie said. Seabaugh likewise struggled to come up with negatives about the little Benz. "The GLC is just solid," he said. "It aces all six of our criteria without skipping a beat." Added Priddle: "It manages to combine calming elegance and fist-pumping fun. My No. 1 choice."

Looking at the GLC's competitive set will also be helpful in understanding our decision. It's pitted against the Lexus RX and the Lincoln MKX. I'm calling these two out specifically because in a comparison test we staged prior to SUV of the Year with all three, the GLC trounced all comers. "The GLC300 takes the gold medal," Walton wrote at the time. "Keep your eye on this one for next year's SUV of the Year." Talk about foreshadowing.

How does the GLC compete against the other strong-selling German SUVs, the Audi Q5 and BMW X3? Solid players for sure, but we can tell from experience that the GLC does it all better. That also applies to the smaller-volume players in the segment, the Jaguar F-Pace, Maserati Levante, Porsche Macan, Acura RDX, Infiniti QX50, and Volvo XC60. All are nice premium SUVs—some even do a good job mimicking sports cars—but none is as well-rounded as the Mercedes-Benz GLC. Although not an official criteria, being the best in a given segment greatly helps secure first-place votes.

The GLC isn't the sexiest choice for SUV of the Year, but it's without hesitation the smartest. The design is solid, the interior is first-class, the engineering is as good as small SUVs get, and the value proposition is strong. We have no crash data yet, but the E-Class chassis that the GLC is based upon underpins one of the safest cars on the road. And despite surprising all of us with its power output, displacing just 2.0 liters means that the engine is also scarily efficient.

If one of our ratings categories carries more weight than any other, it would be performance of intended function. Is there another small premium SUV out there that does so many things right? And one that will satisfy as many of its customers? Not this year. I'll give the final word to Cammisa, as his thoughts echo all of ours. "Mercedes for the win."

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	2016 Mercedes-Benz GLC300 4Matic
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, AWD
ENGINE TYPE	Turbocharged I-4, alum block/head
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	121.5 cu in/1,991cc
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.8:1
POWER (SAE NET)	241 hp @ 5,500 rpm
TORQUE (SAE NET)	273 lb-ft @ 1,300 rpm
REDLINE	6,300 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	16.9 lb/hp
TRANSMISSION	9-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	3.27:1/1.96:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	16.2:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	2.2
BRAKES, F; R	13.5-in vented, drilled disc; 12.6-in vented disc, ABS
WHEELS	8.5 x 20-in, cast aluminum
TIRES	255/45R20 101W Bridgestone Dueler H/P Sport
DIMENSIONS	
WHEELBASE	113.1 in
TRACK, F/R	63.9/63.7 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	183.3 x 74.4 x 64.5 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	5.9 in
APPRCH/DEPART ANGLE	28.0/23.0 deg
TURNING CIRCLE	38.7 ft
CURB WEIGHT	4,078 lb
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	53/47%
TOWING CAPACITY	3,500 lb
SEATING CAPACITY	5
HEADROOM, F/R	37.8/38.5 in
LEGROOM, F/R	40.8/37.3 in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/R	57.3/56.5 in
CARGO VOLUME, BEH F/R	56.5/19.4 cu ft
TEST DATA	
ACCELERATION TO MPH	
0-30	2.3 sec
0-40	3.5
0-50	5.0
0-60	6.8
0-70	9.1
0-80	12.0
0-90	15.4
0-100	19.7
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	3.7
QUARTER MILE	15.3 sec @ 89.7 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	110 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.83 g (avg)
MT FIGURE EIGHT	26.9 sec @ 0.65 g (avg)
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,400 rpm
CONSUMER INFO	
BASE PRICE	$41,875
PRICE AS TESTED	$60,780
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain, driver knee
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	Unlimited
FUEL CAPACITY	17.4 gal
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	**19.6/26.5/22.2 mpg**
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	21/28/24 mpg
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	160/120 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	0.82 lb/mile
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded premium

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	2017 Audi Q7 3.0T (Premium Plus); **(Prestige)**	2017 GMC Acadia All Terrain (SLT-1)	2017 Jaguar F-Pace AWD 35t; **AWD S**
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, AWD	Front-engine, AWD	Front-engine, AWD
ENGINE TYPE	Supercharged 60-deg V-6, alum block/heads	60-deg V-6 alum block/heads	Supercharged 90-deg V-6 alum block/heads
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	182.8 cu in/2,995cc	222.7 cu in/3,649cc	182.8 cu in/2,995cc
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.8:1	11.5:1	10.5:1
POWER (SAE NET)	333 hp @ 5,500 rpm	310 hp @ 6,600 rpm*	340 hp @ 6,500 rpm; **380 hp @ 6,500 rpm**
TORQUE (SAE NET)	325 lb-ft @ 2,900 rpm	271 lb-ft @ 5,000 rpm*	332 lb-ft @ 4,500 rpm
REDLINE	6,250 rpm	7,200 rpm	6,500 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	15.0 lb/hp	13.9 lb/hp	12.7; **11.8 lb/hp**
TRANSMISSION	8-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	8-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	3.20:1/2.14:1	3.16:1/2.34:1	3.73:1/2.49:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Multilink, coil springs/**air springs**, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs/**air springs**, anti-roll bar	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	15.8:1	16.3:1	15.1:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	2.8	2.9	2.5
BRAKES, F; R	14.8-in vented disc; 13.8-in vented disc, ABS	12.6-in vented disc; 12.4-in vented disc, ABS	13.8-in vented disc; 12.8-in vented disc, ABS
WHEELS, F; R	9.0 x 20-in cast aluminum	8.0 x 20-in cast aluminum	8.5 x 19-in; **9.0 x 22-in cast aluminum**
TIRES, F; R	285/45R20 112H (M+S) Goodyear Eagle Sport	235/55R20 102H (M+S) Michelin Premier LTX	255/55R19 111W (M+S) Continental CrossContact LX Sport; **265/40R22 106Y Pirelli P Zero**
DIMENSIONS			
WHEELBASE	117.9 in	112.5 in	113.1 in
TRACK, F/R	66.1/66.6 in	64.5/64.5 in	64.6/65.1 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	199.6 x 77.5 x 68.5 in	193.6 x 75.4 x 66.0 in	186.3 x 76.2 x 65.0 in
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.3/9.7 in	7.8 in	8.4 in
APPRCH/DEPART ANGLE	23.1/14.1; **25.4/22.1 deg**	14.8/22.5 deg	25.5/25.7 deg
TURNING CIRCLE	40.7 ft	38.7 ft	38.9 ft
CURB WEIGHT	4,994; **5,103 lb**	4,305 lb	4,305; **4,481 lb**
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	56/44; **55/45%**	57/43%	51/49%
TOWING CAPACITY	7,700 lb	4,000 lb	5,290 lb
SEATING CAPACITY	7	5	5
HEADROOM, F/M/R	38.4/38.8/35.9 in	40.0/39.6/– in	37.8/37.5/– in
LEGROOM, F/M/R	41.7/38.8/29.2 in	41.0/39.7/– in	40.3/37.2/– in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/M/R	59.5/58.5/49.4 in	59.4/58.7/– in	57.7/55.8/– in
CARGO VOL BEH F/M/R	71.6/37.5/14.8 cu ft	79.0/41.7/– cu ft	63.5/33.5/– cu ft
TEST DATA			
ACCELERATION TO MPH			
0-30	2.0; **2.1 sec**	2.4 sec	1.9; **1.9 sec**
0-40	2.9; **3.0**	3.6	2.8; **2.9**
0-50	4.1; **4.3**	5.1	3.9; **4.0**
0-60	5.4; **5.7**	6.7	5.3; **5.4**
0-70	7.1; **7.6**	9.3	6.7; **6.9**
0-80	9.0; **9.6**	11.8	8.7; **8.8**
0-90	11.2; **12.1**	14.6	10.9; **10.9**
0-100	14.0; **15.2**	18.2	13.9; **13.9**
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	2.7; **3.0**	3.7	2.7; **2.7**
QUARTER MILE	14.0 sec @ 100.2 mph; **14.2 sec @ 97.5 mph**	15.3 sec @ 92.6 mph	13.8 sec @ 99.6 mph; **13.9 sec @ 99.7 mph**
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	121; **117 ft**	126 ft	121; **107 ft**
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.83; **0.85 g (avg)**	0.82 g (avg)	0.86; **0.86 g (avg)**
MT FIGURE EIGHT	26.4 sec @ 0.68 g (avg); **26.5 sec @ 0.67 (avg)**	26.9 sec @ 0.67 g (avg)	25.9 sec @ 0.69 g (avg); **25.9 sec @ 0.72 g (avg)**
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,500 rpm	1,650 rpm	1,700 rpm
CONSUMER INFO			
BASE PRICE	$59,750; **$65,250**	$44,175	$43,385; **$57,695**
PRICE AS TESTED	$68,925; **$73,425**	$47,465	$48,145; **$71,645**
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain	Dual front, front side, front center, f/r curtain	Dual front, front side, f/r head
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles	3 yrs/36,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	4 yrs/Unlimited miles	5 yrs/100,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
FUEL CAPACITY	22.5 gal	22.0 gal	16.6 gal
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	17.4/26.1/20.5; **16.4/25.6/19.6 mpg**	16.9/24.4/19.6 mpg	15.3/23.4/18.2; **17.2/23.4/19.5 mpg**
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	19/25/21 mpg	18/25/20 mpg	18/23/20 mpg
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	177/135 kW-hrs/100 miles	187/135 kW-hrs/100 miles	187/147 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	0.91 lb/mile	0.94 lb/mile	0.97 lb/mile
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded premium	Unleaded regular	Unleaded premium

Not a typo

Really?

Same!

With a V-6!

As quick as the jag

Where's the horsepower difference?

2016 Mazda CX-9 (Touring); **(AWD Signature)**	2016 Tesla Model X 75D; **P90D (Ludicrous)**
Front-engine, FWD/AWD	Front & rear motor, AWD
Turbocharged I-4 alum block/head	Dual three-phase four-pole AC induction motors
DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	N/A
151.8 cu in/2,488cc	N/A
10.5:1	N/A
227 hp @ 5,000 rpm**	259-hp front, 259-hp rear; 328-hp comb; **259-hp front, 503-hp rear; 532-hp comb**
310 lb-ft @ 2,000 rpm	244-lb-ft front, 244-lb-ft rear; 387-lb-ft comb; **244-lb-ft front, 469-lb-ft rear; 713-lb-ft comb**
6,600 rpm	N/A
18.1; **19.0 lb/hp**	15.8; **10.4 lb/hp**
6-speed automatic	1-speed automatic
4.41:1/2.65:1	9.73:1/ 9.73:1
Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, adj air springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, adj air springs, anti-roll bar
17.6:1	14.4:1-15.2:1
3.1; **3.2**	2.6
12.6-in vented disc; 12.8-in disc, ABS	14.2-in vented disc; 14.4-in vented disc, ABS
8.0 x 18-in; **8.5 x 20-in cast aluminum**	9.0 x 20-in; **9.0 x 22-in; 10.0 x 22-in cast aluminum**
255/60R18 107H Yokohama Geolandar H/T (M+S); **255/50R20 104V Falken Ziex CT50 A/S (M+S)**	265/45R20 108V; 275/45R20 110V (M+S) Continental CrossContact LX Sport; **265/35R22; 285/35R22 Goodyear Eagle F1 Asymmetric**
115.3 in	116.7 in
65.3/65.2 in	65.4/66.9 in
199.4 x 77.2 x 67.6 in	198.3 x 81.5 x (65.0-67.6) in
8.8 in	6.2-8.9 in
17.5/18.0 deg	16.3-19.1/18.8-21.0 deg
38.8 ft	40.7 ft
4,112; **4,317 lb**	5,178; **5,516 lb**
56/44; **55/45%**	48/52; **47/53%**
3,500 lb	5,000 lb
7	6
39.3/38.5/35.4 in	41.7/40.9/37.1 in
41.0/39.4/29.7 in	41.2/38.4/32.7 in
57.9/58.1/53.1 in	60.7/56.8/40.0 in
71.2/38.2/14.4 cu ft	–/68.4/N/A cu ft (plus 6.6 cu ft in front trunk)
2.7; **2.3** sec	2.3; **1.3 sec**
3.8; **3.6**	3.2; **1.8**
5.3; **5.2**	4.2; **2.4**
7.5; **7.4**	5.5; **3.2**
10.1; **9.9**	7.1; **4.1**
13.4; **13.5**	8.9; **5.2**
16.9; **17.3**	11.2; **6.6**
21.2; **21.9**	13.9; **8.2**
4.2; **4.2**	2.5; **1.5**
15.9 sec @ 87.3 mph; **15.7 sec @ 86.1 mph**	14.1 sec @ 100.6 mph; **11.7 sec @ 116.0 mph**
130; **123 ft**	113; **106 ft**
0.79; **0.82 g (avg)**	0.84; **0.89 g (avg)**
27.6 sec @ 0.62 g (avg); **26.7 sec @ 0.65 g (avg)**	26.7 sec @ 0.70 g (avg); **25.1 sec @ 0.78 g (avg)**
1,900; **2,000 rpm**	6,850; **6,800 rpm**
$36,870; **$44,915**	$84,200; **$126,700*** **
$38,915; **$45,215**	$95,200; **$135,400*** **
Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain, front knee
3 yrs/36,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles
5 yrs/60,000 miles	8 yrs/Unlimited miles
3 yrs/36,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles
19.0; **19.5 gal**	Lithium-ion battery pack, 75/90 kW-hr
18.0/25.0/20.6; **18.7/25.8/21.3 mpg**	Not available
22/28/24; **21/27/23 mpg**	91/95/93; **89/90/89 MPGe**
153/120 kW-hrs/100 miles; **160/125 kW-hrs/100 miles**	37/35 kW-hrs/100 miles; **38/37 kW-hrs/100 miles**
0.80; **0.83 lb/mile**	0.00 lb/mile (at vehicle)
Unleaded regular	110-volt, 220-volt electricity

* SAE Certified, ** 250 hp w/ 93 AKI gasoline
*** Before applicable tax rebates

LEGEND Notably **GOOD** Notably **POOR**

SUV OF THE YEAR

THE CRITERIA

Advancement in Design Well-executed exterior and interior styling, innovative vehicle packaging, and a good selection and use of materials.

Value Each vehicle's price and equipment levels compared with those of vehicles in the same market segment.

Performance of Intended Function How well the vehicle does the job its planners, designers, and engineers intended it to do.

Efficiency Fuel efficiency and carbon footprint size relative to the vehicle's competitive set.

Safety The ability to help avoid a crash, plus secondary safety measures to protect occupants during an accident.

Engineering Excellence Total vehicle concept and execution; clever solutions to packaging, manufacturing, and dynamics; and cost-effective technology that benefits consumers.

ROAD TEST NOTES

Audi Q7: NHTSA has apparently never tested a Q7, but IIHS has the 2017's results: All tests rated "good," with front crash prevention "superior."

GMC Acadia: With cylinder deactivation, when cruising the highway, this three-row SUV is technically being powered by a four-cylinder engine.

Jaguar F-Pace: The V-6 engine is actually a 90-degree V-8, but with two unused, empty holes. Perhaps an F-Pace SVR V-8 is in the wings?

Mazda CX-9: Mazda cut 198 pounds of weight from the old front-drive CX-9 and as much as 287 pounds from the AWD version while still adding 53 more pounds of sound-deadening material.

Tesla Model X: Has a medical-grade HEPA filter to keep the passenger compartment free of exterior pollens, bacteria, viruses, pollution—but not actual bioweapons, as the name implies.

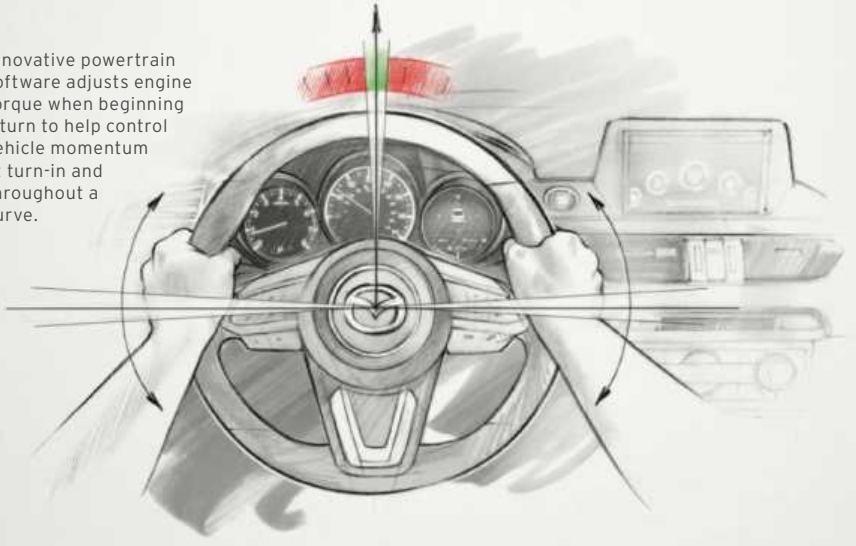
WHY IS A SUBTLE NUANCE
SUCH A BIG DEAL?

zoom-zoom

Signature model shown.

THE NEW MAZDA6 WITH SKYACTIV-VEHICLE DYNAMICS

Without even noticing, you make countless steering adjustments. Mile after mile. Curve after curve. It happens in every car. But unlike other cars, the new Mazda6 features SKYACTIV-VEHICLE DYNAMICS with G-Vectoring Control to help make endless steering adjustments a thing of the past. This revolutionary technology helps control vehicle momentum using minute and immediate adjustments to engine torque



Innovative powertrain software adjusts engine torque when beginning a turn to help control vehicle momentum at turn-in and throughout a curve.

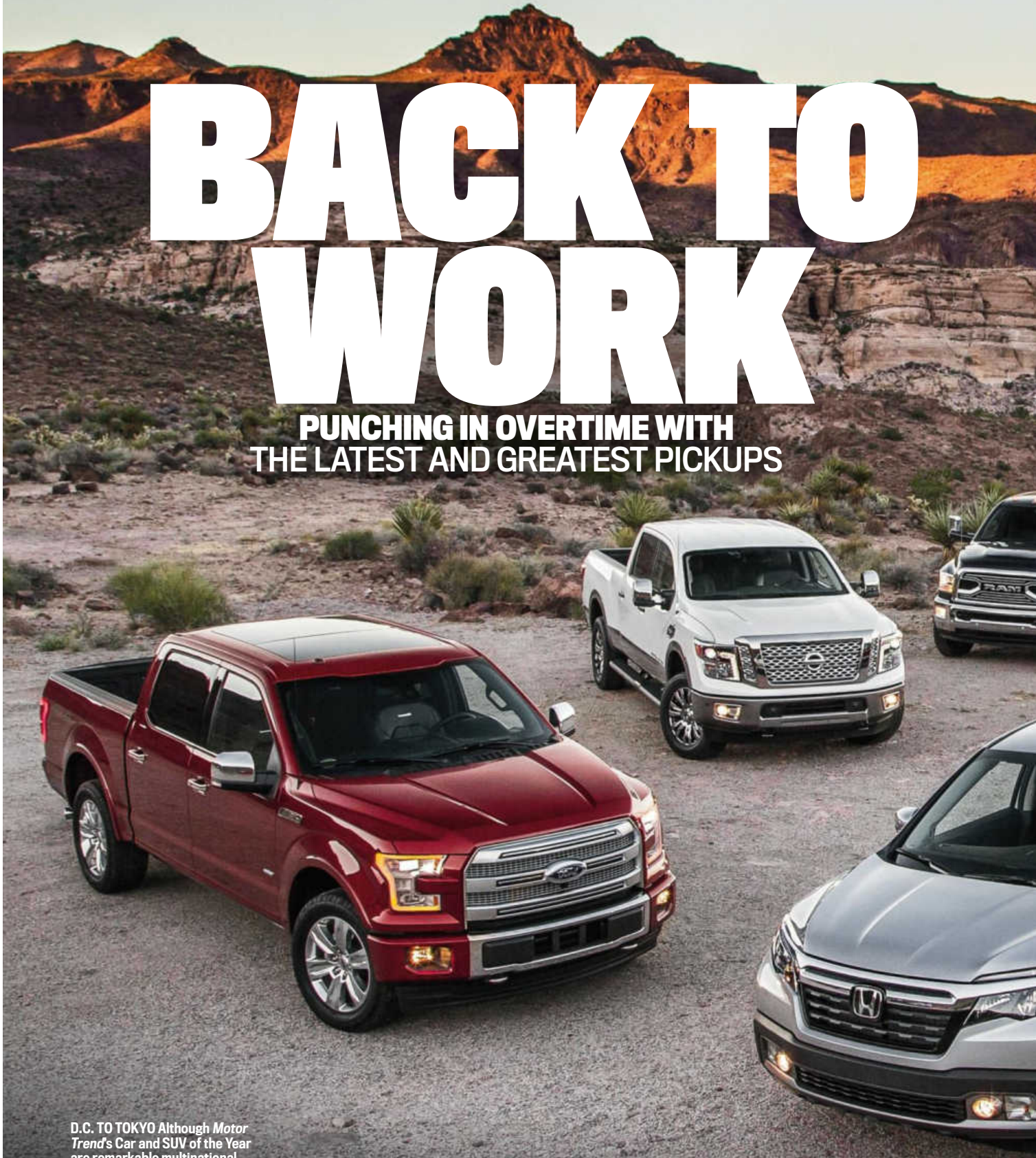
with each new turn. This torque alteration allows the car to load the front tires with additional force. The result? The Mazda6 feels like an extension of you. Giving you a feeling of better control and less fatigue. So both you and your passengers enjoy a better ride. Which is a very big deal indeed.

DRIVING MATTERS®

mazda

BACK TO WORK

PUNCHING IN OVERTIME WITH THE LATEST AND GREATEST PICKUPS



D.C. TO TOKYO Although *Motor Trend*'s Car and SUV of the Year are remarkable multinational affairs, Truck has always showcased robust U.S.-Japan relations. But when will the rest of the truck world come to America?

Words *Motor Trend* editors
Photographs *Motor Trend* staff

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Road test editor

THE LINEUP **Ford F-150 ■ Ford F-Series Super Duty Honda Ridgeline ■ Nissan Titan ■ Nissan Titan XD ■ Ram HD**

At their core, pickup trucks are rugged vehicles with big boxes tacked on the back. They can perform brawny, important tasks, such as tugging a boat to a Shasta Lake bachelor party. Or the more mundane chore of moving your compadre's couch in exchange for pizza. It's the story lines we as drivers weave that make the pickup so fascinating.

This year's Truck of the Year stable of all-new or significantly revised trucks includes the gasoline versions of the Nissan Titan. It's not quite the half-ton household nameplate of the Silverado, Ram 1500, or F-150. It also has taken more than a decade for the second-generation Titan to come into being.

And although Nissan is flashing the underdog card, we have the perennial heavyweight F-150, too. It flaunts a new EcoBoost V-6 and 10-speed automatic transmission. Fast fact: Three previous iterations of the F-150 were named our Truck of the Year during the first-generation Titan's lifespan.

Anchoring the weighty end of the seesaw are the frenemies Ford Super Duty and Ram Heavy Duty. One (Ram) was the first to touch 900 lb-ft of torque for a mainstream vehicle, and it boasts a ridiculous max towing number (31,210 pounds). The Super Duty, overhauled for the first time since Monica Lewinsky was a trending topic, throws down the gauntlet with even more twist and trailering ridiculousness (925 lb-ft and up to 31,300 pounds on the F-350).

Two disturbers of the truck peace are present, as well. The five-eighths-ton tweener Nissan Titan XD returns for a second straight year, this time with a burly gas V-8 to complement the rorty Cummins V-8 we've already tested. The Honda Ridgeline, a big disrupter in the small-truck arena and the 2006 TOTY winner, continues forging its own unruly path with unibody assembly, multilink rear suspension, and standard front-wheel drive.

Our bumper-pull typical trailer weights established by class are back—3,000 pounds for the Ridgeline,

Road Loop Up and down then around and around

Our 21.5-mile road loop navigated Kingman, Arizona, then climbed into the nearby foothills. The 1,785-foot elevation gain with a series of twists and turns was an excellent way to evaluate each truck's transmission performance and handling. Upon descent, our loop joined Interstate 40 back into Kingman—a short stretch perfect for testing wind and road noise and the infotainment systems.

TREACHEROUS Don't let the scenery fool you. The loop's roadsides are littered with free-roaming bovines that lazily gaze upon each truck as we whiz by.

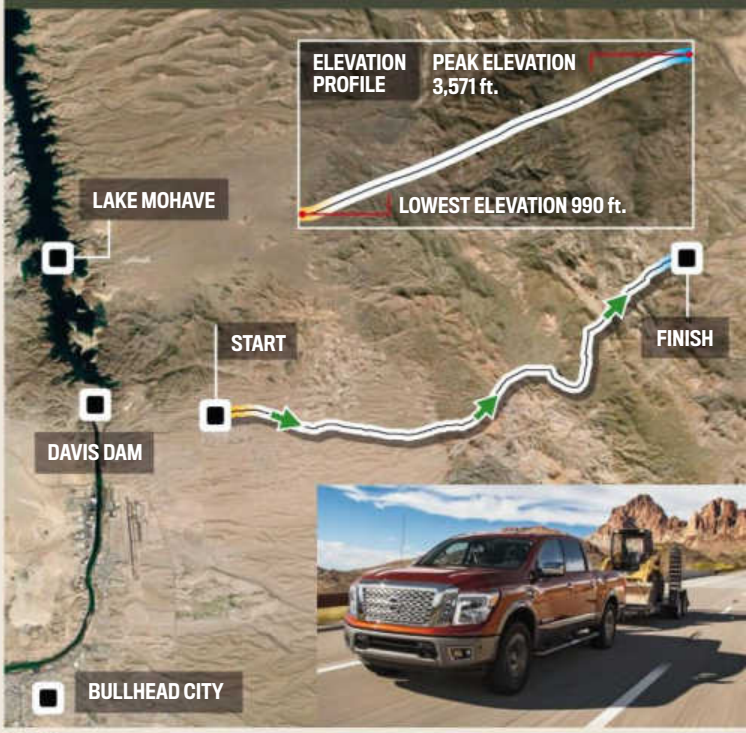
WHERE WE TESTED

GOOGLE EARTH

EXERCISE After driving in circles, a siesta in the Ridgeline's in-bed trunk is essential.

Arizona Proving Ground Testin' and towin'

Highway 68 Davis Dam grade



FCA's Arizona Proving Ground is a world-class vehicle evaluation facility with every manner of test surface and condition you could imagine. In past OTY contests, we've attempted top-speed blasts on the 5-mile oval and run amok on the surrounding miles of dirt roads, but for Truck of the Year, what we really needed was the perfectly flat, 16.9-acre asphalt lake and four precision-ballasted trailers.

REAL WORK In order to get a 30,000-pound trailer, proving grounds mechanics loaded and bolted down the ballast while we wrote emails.

CRUISE CONTROL Careening downhill exposes cruise-control systems that are unable to hold the set speeds.

We don't drive over the Davis Dam, per se, but Highway 68 linking Bullhead City and Kingman is the inspiration for the SAE J2807 standard. It's more than 11 miles to climb up and over the 3,571-foot summit at Union Pass. A skid-steer loader secured to a trailer offers a roughly 7,500-pound towing challenge for the able trucks. This test quickly separates contenders from pretenders.

7,000 pounds for the conventional light-duty (plus Titan XD), and 10,000 pounds for three-quarter-ton and up. A 30,000-pound gooseneck trailer makes a special appearance, as does a 7,500-pound skid-steer loader/trailer combo that we towed on the fun portion of Arizona's Highway 68, aka SAE J2807's Davis Dam grade. After two weeks packed with instrumented testing, rigorous driving and evaluating, and down-home tail-gating, we arrive at the 2017 *Motor Trend* Truck of the Year. **Benson Kong**

YANK IT By the time all was said and done, we did 20 different tow tests.

Ford F-150

We Like: The reworked steering and straight-line dominance. **We Don't Like:** That the ride is still jittery; the polarizing interior details.

Now in its third model year, the F-150 adds a new powertrain and other improved bits.

Ford's revisions to the P552 platform are a definite improvement. The new 3.5-liter twin-turbo V-6 with auto start/stop is magic, creating 375 hp (10 more than before) and 470 lb-ft of torque (up 50).

Coupled to a new 10-speed automatic transmission, our Platinum-trim test truck is 0.3-second quicker than the 2015 model from 0 to 60 mph (6.1 seconds, blistering for a pickup). It also shaved 0.3 second in the quarter mile, to 14.7 seconds, prompting the observation, "Weren't 14-second quarters just for sports cars only a few years ago?" Yet Real MPG increases, too, from 2015's 14.8/19.9/16.8 mpg city/highway/combined to 17.1/21.1/18.7.

Reynolds deemed the Ford's steering "rubbery, but other times it showed some authority." And ride quality remains rougher than others in the class; Loh said it's "noticeably busier than the Nissan Titan, and I think best-in-class still goes to Ram with the optional air suspension." The F-150 easily pulled our trailers but was the only participant with a spooky moment cresting the Union Pass, where it didn't feel completely stable heading downhill.

The big touches—aluminum body panels, camera views out the wazoo, and towing assistance features—impressed us. But familiar foibles like the cartoonish gearshift knob bugged us.

Lieberman lauded Ford for knowing the segment so well and quickly adapting with the new engine, new transmission, and revised steering: "I applaud them for changing so much in such a short amount of time." **BK**

SPECS 2017 Ford F-150 Platinum 4x4 EcoBoost	
Base Price/As Tested	**$58,455**/$63,610
Power (SAE net)	**375 hp** @ 5,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**470 lb-ft** @ 3,500 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph*	**6.1; 13.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.7 sec** @ 95.0 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)	**19.3 sec** @ 72.8 mph
Davis Dam Frustration**	**16.0 sec, 1,071 ft**
Braking, 60-0 mph	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.77 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.8 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**17/23/20 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 5-pass, 4-door truck **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.5L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve V-6/10-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 5,521 lb (57/43%) **WHEELBASE** 145 in **TRACK (F/R)** 67.6/67.6 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 231.9 x 79.9 x 77.2 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 198/147 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 1.01 lb/mile

*Unladen; towing 7,000-pound trailer
**35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer

Dodging monsoons and haboobs

Radiator Springs exists. Even if you're passionate about traveling the original Route 66, you may have missed the one-horsepower town of Cool Springs. Located on the westbound stretch of America's oldest highway heading toward Oatman, Arizona, Cool Springs has been a prominent feature in two Hollywood movies—blown up in one and blown off in the other.

Action-movie junkies will know Cool Springs as the desert hamlet turned flaming ruin in *Universal Soldier*, the cyborg-warrior pic starring Dolph Lundgren and Jean-Claude Van Damme. Normally, that would be sufficient fame for any small town's IMDB profile.

But when Disney's Pixar Studios started looking for a locale of a

PAST WINNERS? The town of Yucca, Arizona, shares its truck treasures.

Honda Ridgeline

We Like: Its smooth ride and sharp handling. **We Don't Like:** The high price, clumsy infotainment system, and plain design.

This is the truck for people who dislike the jouncy ride and clumsy handling compromises that come with truck ownership. Perhaps you have a lifestyle involving a lot of mud and muck, but you don't want to mess up your SUV's precious carpet. But, eww, a pickup truck?

The Ridgeline is basically a Pilot SUV with an open bed and a longer wheelbase (for stability under load). Its unibody structure and independent rear suspension help it handle more precisely and ride more smoothly than a traditional body-on-frame, leaf-spring truck.

"When towing the 3,000-pound trailer, the engine's VTEC changeover at 5,500 rpm is very evident under load," tow-meister Walton said. "Yet upshifts came precisely at redline, and the Ridgeline felt as if it could pull much more than this. This is as much towing capability as most consumers will ever need."

Cool features include the audio speaker housed in the bedliner, as well as the huge hidden compartment under the bedliner, where you can stash precious cargo (or convert it into a cozy roadside hot tub for two).

Complaints: Although the bed compartment locks, the tailgate does not. The infotainment system features the same horrible Honda interface. You cannot manually select gears. And its drab, retrograde design and similarities to its platform-sharing SUV meant we mistook it for our video crew's Pilot on several occasions.

Lieberman summed up our thoughts. "There's just not anything truckish or trucklike about this thing," he said. "For much less money you could have the Titan two-door with a V-8." **MR**

SPECS 2017 Honda Ridgeline AWD (RTL-E)

Base Price/As Tested	**$42,270**/$42,270
Power (SAE net)	**280 hp** @ 6,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**262 lb-ft** @ 4,700 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph*	**7.3; 12.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.7 sec** @ 89.1 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)	**18.8 sec** @ 74.9 mph
Davis Dam Frustration	**Not tested**
Braking, 60-0 mph	**129 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.78 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.0 sec** @ 0.61 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**18/25/21 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door truck **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.5L SOHC 24-valve V-6/6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,510 lb (58/42%) **WHEELBASE** 125.2 in **TRACK (F/R)** 66.1/66.0 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 210.0 x 78.6 x 70.8 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 187/135 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.94 lb/mile

*Unladen; towing 3,000-pound trailer

stereotypical Southwestern desert burg bypassed by superhighways for its animated film *Cars*, Cool Springs and neighboring Hackberry and Oatman seemed like perfect sites. Once boasting a gas station and tourist cabins for weary travelers not wanting to surmount the slithery, treacherous Sitgreaves Pass as dusk neared, Cool Springs had been skirted by I-40 and fallen victim to neglect, vandalism, and action heroes. A meticulous ground-up restoration in 2004 had done little to enhance Cool Springs' tourist interest.

Enter itinerant Route 66 Mother Road artist Bob Waldmire, a car guy with a 1965 Ford Mustang, a 1966 Chevrolet camper-bus, and a 1972 VW van—and a booster of northern Arizona's forgotten towns. Waldmire so clicked with the *Cars* scouts that he was even going to be the name for the VW bus voiced by George Carlin. But the negotiations fell apart, as the vegetarian Waldmire couldn't abide the idea of McDonald's giving Cars toys to kids as Happy Meal tchotchkes. He died a few years later—after seeing his desert dreamscapes on the big screen, uncredited. If you stand around the dusty turnouts of Cool Springs and admire the

Nissan Titan

We Like: The good ride quality and accurate steering. **We Don't Like:** The noisy engine and subpar pulling power.

4x4 SL

Sometimes, fitting into a group can take time. Ask any rat race–weary Manhattanite who's attempted to relocate to small-town Maine. Or the four-wheel analogue—an Asian automaker entering the long-calcified American full-size truck segment. Let's just say Toyota and Nissan haven't been invited to join the Detroit Athletic Club.

And now, as Nissan continues to roll out its second-gen Titan, the standard-duty variant is finally one of the boys. All our judges noted the Titan's smooth ride. Rechtin found a "much smoother ride than the Ford in routine around-town travel." And everybody fell for the stark simplicity, light weight, and happy handling of the bare-bones Titan S single-cab work truck. That version hauls, ahem, mulch.

But as the features (and weight) climbed, performance dropped. At full-boot throttle, the Titan's 5.6-liter engine is harsh. The Titan also struggled up the Davis Dam tow climb and overspeed its cruise control on the way down. "It stumbled off the line, both unladen and especially with the trailers attached," Walton said. "Perhaps this is a gentle throttle-map strategy, but I would've expected some snap from the big V-8."

Its styling is either refreshingly differentiated from the domestic brands or simply falls short of them. And the interior content quality, features, and packaging, including seat comfort and the reach to change radio stations, fall short of class-topping Ford.

At its heart, the Titan is a me-too pickup, and that's not enough to gain entrance to the club. As I said, "It's simply a competent alternative." **KR**

4X4 S
REAL MPG 13/19/15

SPECS	2017 Nissan Titan 4x4 S	2017 Nissan Titan 4x4 SL	2017 Nissan Titan 4x4 Platinum Reserve
Base Price/As Tested	**$32,000 (est)**/$32,000 (est)	**$50,655**/$51,015	**$56,595**/$56,595
Power (SAE net)	**390 hp** @ 5,800 rpm	**390 hp** @ 5,800 rpm	**390 hp** @ 5,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**394 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm	**394 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm	**394 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**6.5 sec**	**6.8; 14.1 sec**	**6.9; 13.7 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.0 sec** @ 93.9 mph	**15.3 sec** @ 92.7 mph	**15.4 sec** @ 92.9 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)	**Not tested**	**20.1 sec** @ 70.1 mph	**20.0 sec** @ 70.7 mph
Davis Dam Frustration**	**Not tested**	**Not tested**	**18.3 sec, 1,175 ft**
Braking, 60–0 mph	**125 ft**	**126 ft**	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.74 g** (avg)	**0.74 g** (avg)	**0.72 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.7 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)	**28.5 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)	**28.3 sec** @ 0.59 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**15/21/18 mpg**	**15/21/18 mpg**	**15/21/18 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT SL & RESERVE Front-engine, 4WD, 5-pass, 4-door truck **S** Front-engine, 4WD, 3-pass, 2-door truck **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 5.6L DOHC 32-valve V-8/7-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) SL** 5,927 lb (57/43%) **S** 5,404 lb (60/40%) **RESERVE** 5,974 lb (57/43%) **WHEELBASE** 139.8 in **TRACK (F/R) S** 67.9/67.9 in **SL & RESERVE** 68.1/68.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT SL & RESERVE** 228.1 x 79.5 x 77.2 in **S** 228.1 x 79.5 x 76.0 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** 225/160 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 1.13 lb/mile

*Unladen; towing 7,000-pound trailer **35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer

Wile E. Coyote vistas, you'll see more than a few animated freeze-frames from *Cars* running through your head.

This recounting comes courtesy of "J.B.," the curator of the Cool Springs Station & Cabins and our host while we staged our TOTY entrants for photo and video shoots in the Sitgreaves Pass. Although Cool Springs now pumps no gas and rents no cabins—"there was a thing with the county," J.B. says—it does offer a nickel-tour museum full of regional artifacts and cool memorabilia. J.B. has his own story, too. Living in the Polynesian paradise of Tonga, J.B., a veteran, was having "some issues" with the VA and needed to return stateside. He accidentally opened a spam email that included a job posting to be the unpaid curator of the Cool Springs Museum. Why not, he said.

J.B.'S PLACE Cool Springs rises again.

Nissan Titan XD

We Like: The premise of a three-quarter-ton truck for a half-ton price. **We Don't Like:** That it doesn't meet its premise.

New engines are a big deal in Truckland, which is why the Titan XD returns to TOTY this year—this time with Nissan's familiar 5.6-liter gas V-8. But the new offering simply did not impress, and it seriously underperformed in a couple crucial tests.

"On-road performance feels just about adequate," Kong said. "The fuel economy is not great for a tweener class truck."

Also, the performance gap with the light-duty Titans with the same engine made the XD feel "stunted," Kong added. The V-8 has a loud, proud engine note at wide-open throttle, but a lot of time is spent there, particularly when towing, and power delivery often fell short.

"Both Titans struggled to reach 55 mph up the grade," Evans said. Not only did the XD perform poorly on its way up, but its cruise control also couldn't hold speed downhill.

That said, if you tow or haul regularly, the Titan XD is the way to go with its extra capability.

The XD's exterior design was largely given the thumbs up. But the interior was a less compelling array of the familiar, routine Nissan knobs, buttons, and switches—not to mention the low-res screen and glitchy infotainment system.

Our judges split on ride comfort, with Rechtin and Reynolds preferring the Titan XD's ride over the either Ford's for bumpy surfaces, although Rechtin noted the XD's suspension became distressed more quickly when road quality deteriorated.

"Unless you absolutely won't buy domestic, there's no compelling case for this truck," Evans said in summing up the XD's OTY fate. "It's not that it's bad. It's that the competition is better." **EL**

SPECS 2016 Nissan Titan XD 4x4 Platinum Reserve V8	
Base Price/As Tested	**$56,715**/$57,110
Power (SAE net)	**390 hp** @ 5,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**401 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph*	**7.4; 15.1 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.7 sec** @ 87.5 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)	**20.1 sec** @ 68.9 mph
Davis Dam Frustration	**40.4 sec, 2,969 ft**
Braking, 60-0 mph	**124 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.75 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.2 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**Not rated**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 5-pass, 4-door truck **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 5.6L DOHC 32-valve V-8/7-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 6,840 lb (56/44%) **WHEELBASE** 151.6 in **TRACK (F/R)** 68.6/68.6 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 242.7 x 80.7 x 78.8 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY Not rated **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** Not rated

*Unladen; towing 7,000-pound trailer

Why not, indeed. So the next time you're zooming across I-40, take a detour at the Shinarump Drive exit and say hi to J.B.

The idea of conducting vehicle testing in a desert like this is smart because, well, it's hot and dry. So we were bemused by the morning showers that delayed our first day of testing. As soon as the pavement looked devoid of low-mu airborne residue, Kim Reynolds and Chris Walton were back to flogging the Ridgeline and Titan. As the late-summer climate launched predictable afternoon monsoons, our photographers dodged lightning bolts while racing to set up to capture rainbows, the golden-hour sunset, and the haboob that loomed on the horizon.

For all the meteorological adventure—and the heart-stopping panic braking to

WEATHER REPORT The team prepares to hitch trailers as monsoons lurk on the horizon.

Ram 2500/3500 HD

We Like: The exterior design; the 2500's ride; the 3500's muscles. **We Don't Like:** The aged interiors; the 2500's muscles; the 3500's ride.

3500 Limited 4x4 Cummins

We simply do not understand gasoline-powered heavy-duty trucks. Fundamentally speaking, who will buy one? "For serious hauling and towing, gasoline is not the way to go," Evans said. "The torque of a diesel makes the 3500 so much more drivable in all conditions."

Not entirely. Take, for instance, the ride of the 3500 diesel dually. "Poor" doesn't begin to describe it despite its $1,595 rear air suspension. "It rides like a truck from 10 years ago," Loh said. "I felt bumps and other vibrations like no other truck here on parts of the drive loop that I didn't feel anything in any other truck."

Weirdly, and probably due to its off-road package, the 2500 rode great. "How much is due to the Bilstein dampers?" Loh wondered.

The clattery Cummins diesel is capable, but it's hindered by driveline lash. "It's brilliant at towing and in doing all those things a monster like this is born for," Reynolds said. "But the rest of the time, it's a pretty miserable road partner."

The heavy-duty Rams' biggest problem, however, is that everything it can do, both Ford Super Duties can do better. Towing, hauling, phone connectivity, mirror coverage, interior features and fabrics—you name it, the burly Ford has the Ram beat. Except for one thing: looks.

Even if the bull's-nostrils grille isn't your thing, you have to admire the big Ram's Kardashianesque hips. "The styling for the dually is almost sexy in its swoopiness," Rechtin said. Walton concurred: "Tom Gale's styling legacy is aging extremely well, and the truck looks as tough as ever." Amen. **JL**

2500 4x4 Off Road
REAL MPG 9/16/11

SPECS	2017 Ram 2500 SLT 4x4 Off Road 6.4	2016 Ram 3500 Limited 4x4 Cummins
Base Price/ As Tested	**$48,030**/$54,335	**$69,610**/$76,540
Power (SAE net)	**410 hp** @ 5,600 rpm	**385 hp** @ 2,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**429 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm	**900 lb-ft** @ 1,700 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph*	**8.3; 20.7 sec**	**8.6; 18.5; 34.6 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.2 sec** @ 87.3 mph	**16.6 sec** @ 84.0 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)	**22.7 sec** @ 63.1 mph	**21.8 sec** @ 64.8 mph; **27.2 sec** @ 52.7 mph
Davis Dam Frustration**	**34.9 sec, 2,313 ft**	**15.2 sec, 1,004 ft**
Braking, 60–0 mph	**136 ft**	**134 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.71 g** (avg)	**0.69 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**29.7 sec** @ 0.54 g (avg)	**30.0 sec** @ 0.55 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**Not rated**	**Not rated**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, 4WD, 5-pass, 4-door truck **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** **2500** 6.4L OHV 16-valve V-8/6-speed automatic **3500** 6.7L turbodiesel OHV 24-valve I-6/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R DIST) 2500** 7,466 lb (56/44%) **3500** 8,628 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE 2500** 160.0 in **3500** 169.3 in **TRACK (F/R) 2500** 68.3/68.2 in **3500** 69.5/75.8 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT 2500** 248.4 x 79.1 x 78.3 in **3500** 259.3 x 96.4 x 78.9 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** Not rated **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** Not rated

*(2500) Unladen; towing 10,000-pound trailer

**35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer *(3500) Unladen; towing 10,000-; 30,000-pound trailer **35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer

LUCKY After a week in the desert, who found Golden Calipers at the end of this rainbow?

avoid free-range cows and calves ambling across Route 259 in Hualapai Canyon—there is the desultory repetition of putting every vehicle through the exact same test, again and again. Sure, there is an engineer's excitement of seeing how each truck performs on the 35–55-mph uphill acceleration test while towing 7,500 pounds of skid loader and whether the cruise control will hold speed heading downhill. But it's a long slog up and down the Union Pass. To break the monotony, Lieberman tested each trucks' Bluetooth connectivity with his smartphone's anarchic audio playlist (Opeth, NoMeansNo, Tom Waits). To see whether Reynolds would hit the "audio off" button before we hit the summit, now that was the real test. **Mark Rechtin**

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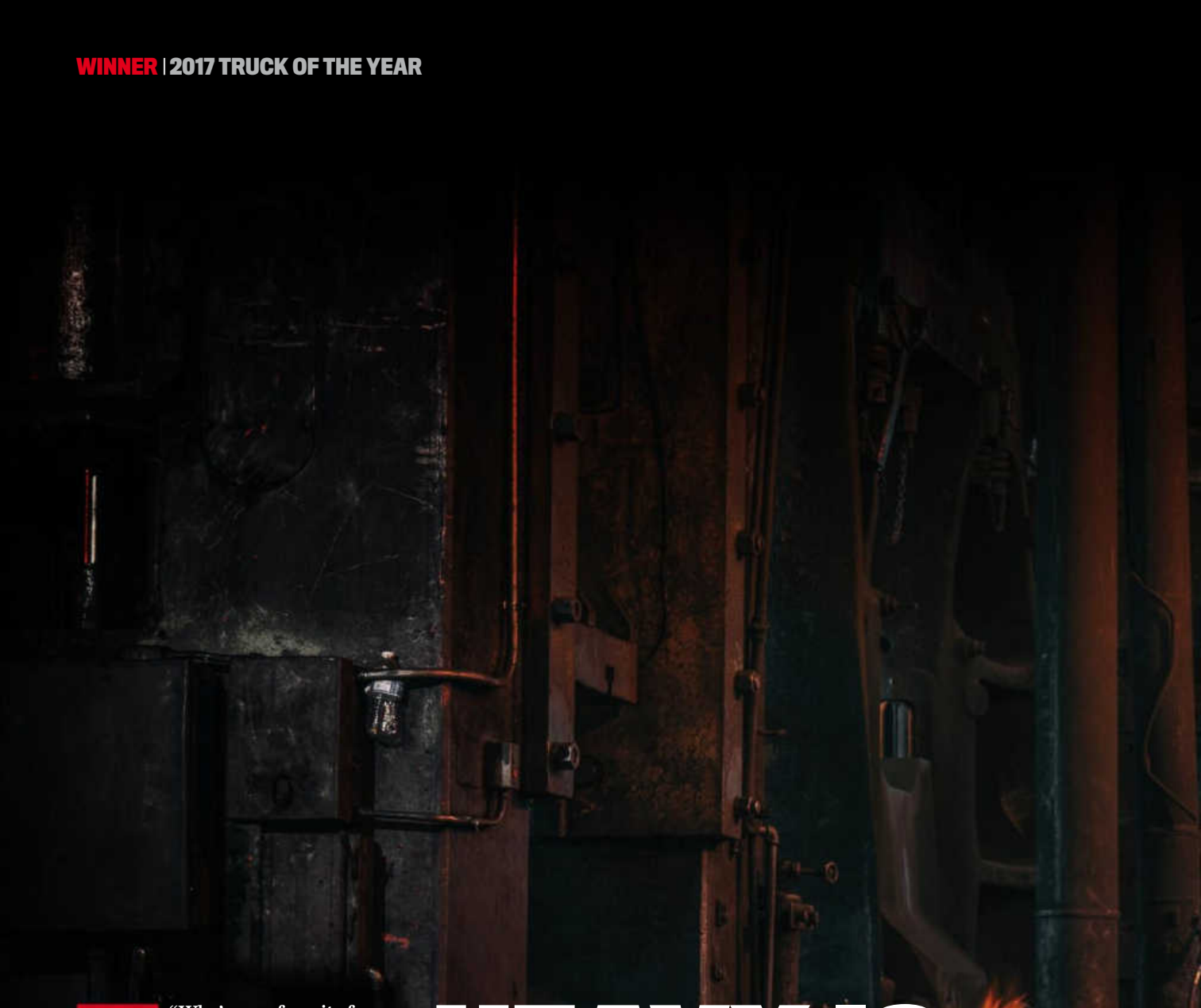

HEAVY IS THE TRUCK THAT TAKES THE CROWN

"Who's your favorite for Truck of the Year?"

The conversation plays out across the office in the weeks leading up to all the Of The Year competitions. The question comes from all angles: from video producers, art directors, fellow judges, non-participating editors, photographers—even the honchos in corporate. We have been thinking about this topic ever since we saw the official invite list of vehicles, sometimes since the launch of a particularly impressive vehicle earlier in the year. We all have our favorites, but it's our thorough regimen of testing that determines the winner. Nowhere are those numbers more important than for Truck of the Year.

An Of The Year contest plays out one of three ways: There's no clear winner right up to the end; there are two to three potential winners and a nail-biting vote; or there's a clear winner early on and the rest becomes a coronation. In this year's Truck of the Year competition, we knew by the halfway point which truck would win.

Sometimes, one vehicle so clearly satisfies or exceeds our criteria that we spend more time looking for faults than attributes, just to be sure we haven't gotten ahead of ourselves. In this year's field, the Ford Super Duty trucks emerged as the intuitive choice, one that had to be scrutinized, analyzed, and picked apart in subsequent days of testing. Some competitors rose in standing in the course of our evaluations, but none so much that the Super Duties needed to sweat. Indeed, the Fords' ability to remain cool under our extreme pressure, regardless of the circumstances, made it all the more clear they deserved this award.

2017
MOTOR TREND TRUCK OF THE YEAR®

FORD SUPER DUTY

Words Scott Evans
Photographs Andrew Trahan

ADVANCEMENT IN DESIGN

Design is inherently subjective, but there are many ways to objectively judge it. Is it cohesive? Do all the individual elements serve a purpose, and do they advance the design as a whole? Does the design separate the vehicle from the competition, and does it speak to its intended market? The Ford Super Duties answer all these questions in the affirmative.

By their utilitarian nature, trucks can be inherently hard to differentiate. Get too creative, and you risk impinging on the vehicle's ability to get the job done—and for the working professional, that's what matters at the end of the day. Clunky but proficient wins over gorgeous and inefficient. The Ford Super Duties strike this balance expertly, looking like no other truck on the road while keeping the customer mission front of mind. They are clearly and distinctly Ford Super Duties seen from afar, and the design doesn't break down the closer you look.

Although the design is busy in places, an obvious vision has been executed. Every panel relates to the adjacent one, even around corners, and every line serves a purpose. Critically, the design as a whole advances the direction of the previous generation without losing or abandoning its signature. From every angle, there is no mistaking this truck for anything but a Ford.

EFFICIENCY

Vehicles of this size—or, more specifically, this weight—are not rated by EPA. Fortunately, we have our own means of evaluating fuel efficiency thanks to our partners at Emissions Analytics.

Subjected to our Real MPG testing regimen, the Ford Super Duties, in all configurations, handily outperformed the equivalent Ram trucks. Given the gas-powered F-250 weighs some 400 pounds less than the Ram 2500 with similar equipment, we expected an advantage and weren't surprised to see the Ford return 11.0/16.4/12.9 mpg city/highway/combined versus the Ram's 9.2/15.9/11.4.

We were far more impressed with the performance of the F-350 dual-rear-wheel diesel. Despite weighing in at 8,643 pounds—15 pounds heavier than the Ram 3500 dual-rear-wheel diesel—the F-350 returned an outstanding 16.3/20.5/18.0 mpg city/highway/combined. Excellent in its own right, the F-350's result is all the more impressive compared against the Ram 3500 dually's 13.3/17.3/14.8 result. Did we mention class-leading torque and towing/payload capability?

There are strong arguments to be made for technological advancement and environmental protection, but the Super Duties' efficiency will most resonate with customers at the pump. Given these trucks do more physical labor than any other class of non-commercial vehicle, the Super Duties' advantages in efficiency will be a boon to working professionals balancing costs with capability.

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

Ford ads tout the Super Duty's class-leading 32,500-pound towing capacity. (Capabilities of the forthcoming Chevy

WORK SPACE The interiors earned high marks for quality and functionality from the judges, although the shifter could be more precise and Sync 3 reset itself during one drive loop.

BIG IS SMALL **The Super Duties drove like smaller trucks, which couldn't be said of most contenders.**

Silverado HD had not been announced as of this writing.) That's impressive. Equally so is the also-class-leading 7,630-pound max payload capacity.

What the ads don't tell you is how the truck actually behaves with 16 tons burdening the rear axle. With a class-leading 925 lb-ft of torque on tap, the F-350 Super Duty will begin rolling forward at idle when you release the brake—despite a gross combined vehicle weight of more than 40,000 pounds. That's simply stunning torque. Give it some throttle, and it's a strong, steady pull to freeway speeds. Braking from such speeds is handled with confidence thanks to a powerful exhaust brake, a well-calibrated Tow/Haul mode, and strong 14-inch rotors front and rear.

"With 30,000 pounds in tow, the F-350 was remarkably unfazed," Chris Walton said. "Sure, there's a sense of weight behind, but not 15 tons. The engine pulled smoothly through the rev range, the transmission clicked off smooth, quick upshifts without surging, and when it came time to slow after the quarter mile, the Jake brake gave me so much compression braking that I felt extremely confident transitioning from off-throttle to gentle braking for the turnaround."

We had the luxury in this test of having the Super Duty's most direct competitor on hand, and it proved instructive. The Super Duties accelerated more quickly and smoothly than their Ram Heavy Duty rivals, braked comparably well, and handled better both on the skidpad and the figure eight. Towing at near max capability, the F-350 was quicker and smoother than the Ram 3500 and felt less burdened. In a trailering slalom test,

the F-350 was able to carry considerably more speed than the Ram 3500 and experienced less body roll, increasing driver confidence. The same held true when comparing the gas-powered F-250 to the equivalent Ram 2500.

On the topic of the gasoline-powered trucks, the F-250's aluminum body helped it save 400 pounds relative to the Ram. The F-350 weighs more than the

Heavy-duty truck customers aren't weekend cowboys. Capability and usability are king.

SPECS	Ford F-250 Lariat 4x4	Ford F-250 Platinum 4x4 6.7L	Ford F-350 Lariat 4x4 6.7L
Base Price/As Tested	**$51,815**/$61,550	**$72,110**/$77,705	**$54,680**/$74,205
Power (SAE net)	**385 hp** @ 5,750 rpm	**440 hp** @ 2,800 rpm	**440 hp** @ 2,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**430 lb-ft** @ 3,800 rpm	**925 lb-ft** @ 1,800 rpm	**925 lb-ft** @ 1,800 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph*	**7.5; 19.1 sec**	**6.9; 16.2 sec**	**7.6; 15.3; 29.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.9 sec** @ 88.1 mph	**15.3 sec** @ 90.1 mph	**15.8 sec** @ 87.7 mph
Quarter Mile (towing)*	**22.2 sec** @ 64.9 mph	**21.2 sec** @ 69.5 mph	**20.2 sec** @ 67.3 mph; **25.3 sec** @ 55.9 mph
Davis Dam Frustration**	**24.6 sec**, 1,508 ft	**13.4 sec**, 858 ft	**13.4 sec**, 877 ft
Braking, 60-0 mph	**150 ft**	**143 ft**	**135 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.75 g** (avg)	**0.71 g** (avg)	**0.72 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.9 sec** @ 0.57 g (avg)	**29.7 sec** @ 0.54 g (avg)	**29.0 sec** @ 0.57 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated

VEHICLE LAYOUT **250 LARIAT** Front-engine, 4WD, 6-pass, 4-door truck **250 PLATINUM, 350 LARIAT** Front-engine, 4WD, 5-pass, 4-door truck
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **250 LARIAT** 6.2L SOHC 16-valve V-8/6-speed automatic **250 PLATINUM, 350 LARIAT** 6.7L turbodiesel OHV 32-valve V-8/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R DIST)** **250 LARIAT** 7,070 lb (57/43%) **250 PLATINUM** 7,898 lb (60/40%) **350 LARIAT** 8,643 lb (57/43%)
WHEELBASE **250 LARIAT, 250 PLATINUM** 159.8 in **350 LARIAT** 176.0 in **TRACK (F/R)** **250 LARIAT, 250 PLATINUM** 68.3/67.2 in **350 LARIAT** 69.1/74.7 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** **250 LARIAT, 250 PLATINUM** 250.0 x 80.0 x 81.5 in **350 LARIAT** 266.2 x 96.0 x 81.0 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY Not rated **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** Not rated

250 LARIAT/PLATINUM *Unladen; towing 10,000-pound trailer **35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer
350 LARIAT *Unladen; towing 10,000-; 30,000-pound trailer **35-55-mph passing acceleration with 7,500-pound trailer

Ram 3500, which Ford attributes to the reinforcements necessary to tow 16 tons.

The Fords' advantage became inescapable as we transitioned to a real-world test—towing about 7,500 pounds of skid loader up the grueling Davis Dam grade. In a 35–55-mph uphill passing test, both gasoline- and diesel-powered Ford models clobbered the equivalent Rams in both passing time and distance.

Of course, no vehicle is perfect, and we'd be remiss if we didn't call out areas for improvement. The gasoline-powered F-250 goes light on the nose when towing uphill, which makes it prone to tramlining and requires more driver attentiveness. Also, on one occasion, the diesel-powered F-250 under cruise control gasped in the heat and failed to maintain its uphill speed despite having adequate power to do so. Finally, all three Ford Super Duty trucks were prone to moderate bump steer on especially bad pavement and expansion joints.

PERFORMANCE OF INTENDED FUNCTION

"I'm not sure I've ever evaluated a vehicle that hits this criterion so hard," Jonny Lieberman said. None of us argued. Ford has spent an enormous amount of time researching its customers' needs and wants and finding clever engineering solutions. We know from industry research that the vast majority of heavy-duty truck customers aren't weekend cowboys. Capability and usability are king, and Ford has delivered both.

The suite of work-focused technologies baked into the Super Duties was also highly impressive. Although most folks who drive heavy-duty trucks are everyday pros, we noticed the Ford assistance features best helped rookies and those rusty in trailering.

The ability to extend blind-spot detection to cover a trailer adds an important layer of safety, as does the ability to monitor six trailer tires' pressures and the trailer lights on the dashboard. Its 360-degree camera coverage greatly aides maneuvering in close quarters, as do forward- and rear-looking cameras. An additional camera mounted above the rear window, as well as the ability to zoom both this camera and the tailgate-mounted backup camera, makes connecting to a trailer a breeze for one person. A dash-mounted tailgate release saves time and effort when attaching a gooseneck or fifth wheel and when loading or unloading. The ability to add an additional wired backup camera to a trailer and display it on the center console is also helpful, as is the trailer-backing guidance with jackknife warning.

Judges also gave the Super Duties high marks for the inclusion of four 25-amp and two 40-amp auxiliary switches, ready to be connected to power takeoffs and other equipment, and we appreciated the available 400-watt power inverter and two available 110-volt power outlets for charging tools, computers, and more.

SAFETY

The 2017 Ford Super Duties had not yet been crash tested by either the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. However, we expect them to perform well because of the strengthened frame.

ACTIVITY SPACE Staff appreciated the flat rear floor and easily stowed under-seat storage.

Of course, we prefer a vehicle that can avoid collisions in the first place. To increase your chances, Ford has added a number of features, including collision warning, automatic emergency braking, and trailer sway control. All those cameras increase low-speed safety, as does the blind-spot warning system, especially when extended to cover a trailer. Adaptive cruise control helps maintain safe distances both laden and unladen and maintains a set speed on hill descent, even while trailering.

The Super Duty's strong performance in the uphill passing-while-trailering test also indicated a measure of safety, as the trucks are able to more quickly remove themselves from an unsafe situation.

VALUE

Heavy-duty trucks are expensive. Regardless of make, they all start around

CLEAN WIN Across powertrains, cabs, and capabilities, the Ford Super Duties proved themselves the new leaders of the class.

$32,000, roughly the average price of a new vehicle in America. That doesn't seem so bad. But fully loaded—and if you are using a heavy-duty truck to its capacity, you tend to load up on options—the price more than doubles. Value, then, is not synonymous with price. Rather, it is relative to the competition.

Here again, the Super Duty compares favorably. When matched with the only other equally capable truck on the market, the Super Duties are priced roughly the same or better than the equivalent Ram trim level—especially at higher trim levels. It's more than just dollars and cents, though. The Fords offer class-leading towing and hauling. They can also be equipped with a suite of trailering technologies Ram doesn't offer. In terms of content per dollar spent, the Super Duties are the clear class leaders.

WINNERS

As with any Of The Year competition, Truck of the Year is not a direct comparison test. Each truck is judged against our criteria, based on the class it competes in. The Ford F-250 and F-350 score remarkably well on all six—as well as against their direct competition. With its latest Super Duties, Ford has set new benchmarks for capability and functionality. We have no doubt the competition will race to meet Ford's new standard. Putting the competition on notice and forcing them to catch up is a hallmark of an Of The Year winner. Consider the bar raised.

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	2017 Ford F-250 Lariat 4x4; Platinum 4x4 6.7L	2017 Ford F-350 Lariat 4x4 6.7L
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, 4WD	Front-engine, 4WD
ENGINE TYPE	90-deg V-8, iron block/alum heads; Turbodiesel, 90-deg V-8, iron block/alum heads	Turbodiesel, 90-deg V-8, iron block/alum heads
VALVETRAIN	SOHC, 2 valves/cyl; OHV, 4 valves/cyl	OHV, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	379.8 cu in/6,223cc; 406.2 cu in/6,656cc	406.2 cu in/6,656cc
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.8:1; 16.2:1	16.2:1
POWER (SAE NET)	385 hp @ 5,750 rpm; 440 hp @ 2,800 rpm	440 hp @ 2,800 rpm
TORQUE (SAE NET)	430 lb-ft @ 3,800 rpm; 925 lb-ft @ 1,800 rpm	925 lb-ft @ 1,800 rpm
REDLINE	6,000 rpm; 4,000 rpm	4,000 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	18.4; 18.0 lb/hp	19.6 lb/hp
TRANSMISSION	6-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	3.73:1/2.57:1; 3.55:1/2.38:1	4.10:1/2.75:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Live axle, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, leaf springs, anti-roll bar	Live axle, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, leaf springs, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	18.5:1; 15.8-21.3:1	18.5:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	3.8; 3.1	3.1
BRAKES, F; R	14.3-in vented disc; 14.3-in vented disc, ABS	14.3-in vented disc; 14.3-in vented disc, ABS
WHEELS	8.0 x 20-in cast aluminum	6.5 x 17-in forged aluminum
TIRES	275/65R20 126/123R (M+S) Michelin LTX A/T2	245/75R17 121/118R (M+S) Michelin LTX A/T2
DIMENSIONS		
WHEELBASE	159.8 in	176.0 in
TRACK, F/R	68.3/67.2 in	69.1/74.7 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	250.0 x 80.0 x 81.5 in	266.2 x 96.0 x 81.0 in
TURNING CIRCLE	53.0 ft	57.8 ft
CURB WEIGHT	7,070; 7,898 lb	8,643 lb
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	57/43%; 60/40%	57/43%
SEATING CAPACITY	6; 5 pass	5
HEADROOM, F/R	40.8/40.4 in	40.8/40.4 in
LEGROOM, F/R	43.9/43.6 in	43.9/43.6 in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/R	66.7/65.9 in	66.7/65.9 in
CARGO VOLUME, BEHIND 1ST ROW	52.1 cu ft	52.1 cu ft
PICKUP BOX L X W X H	81.9 x 66.9 x 21.1 in	98.1 x 66.9 x 21.1 in
WIDTH BET WHEELHOUSES	50.5 in	50.5 in
PAYLOAD CAPACITY	3,350; 3,450 lb	6,540 lb
TOWING CAPACITY	12,500; 17,600 lb	31,300 lb
TEST DATA		
ACCELERATION TO MPH		
0-30	2.6; 2.1 sec	2.6 sec
0-40	4.0; 3.6	3.9
0-50	5.8; 5.0	5.5
0-60	7.5; 6.9	7.6
0-70	10.1; 9.0	9.9
0-80	13.2; 11.9	12.9
0-90	16.6; 15.2	16.8
0-100	—; —	—
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	3.8; 3.6	4.1
QUARTER MILE	15.9 sec @ 88.1 mph; 15.3 sec @ 90.1 mph	15.8 sec @ 87.7 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	150; 143 ft	135 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.75; 0.71 g (avg)	0.72 g (avg)
MT FIGURE EIGHT	28.9 sec @ 0.57 g (avg); 29.7 sec @ 0.54 g (avg)	29.0 sec @ 0.57 g (avg)
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,600; 1,500 rpm	1,800 rpm
CONSUMER INFO		
BASE PRICE	$51,815; $72,110	$54,680
PRICE AS TESTED	$61,550; $77,705	$74,205
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes; Yes	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles	3 yrs/36,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles; 100,000 miles	5 yrs/100,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	5 yrs/60,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
FUEL CAPACITY	48.0; 34.0 gal	48.0 gal
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	Not Rated	Not Rated
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	**11.0/16.4/12.9/16.4/23.7/19.0 mpg**	**16.3/20.5/18.0 mpg**
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded regular; diesel	Diesel

MOTOR TREND REAL MPG

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	**2017 Ford F-150** Platinum 4x4 EcoBoost Super Crew	**2017 Honda Ridgeline** AWD (RTL-E)	**2017 Nissan Titan 4x4** S Single-Cab; **SL Crew Cab;** *Platinum Reserve Crew Cab*
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, 4WD	Front-engine, AWD	Front-engine, 4WD
ENGINE TYPE	Twin-turbo 60-deg V-6, alum block/heads	60-deg V-6, alum block/heads	90-deg V-8 alum block/heads
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	SOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	213.4 cu in/3,497cc	211.8 cu in/3,471cc	338.8 cu in/5,552cc
COMPRESSION RATIO	10.5:1	11.5:1	11.2:1
POWER (SAE NET)	375 hp @ 5,000 rpm	280 hp @ 6,000 rpm	390 hp @ 5,800 rpm
TORQUE (SAE NET)	470 lb-ft @ 3,500 rpm	262 lb-ft @ 4,700 rpm	394 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm
REDLINE	5,800 rpm	6,750 rpm	6,300 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	14.7 lb/hp	16.1 lb/hp	13.9; **15.2;** *15.3 lb/hp*
TRANSMISSION	10-speed automatic	6-speed automatic	7-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE/LOW RATIO	3.55:1/2.24:1/2.64:1	4.25:1/2.36:1/not offered	2.94:1/2.27:1/2.72:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, leaf springs, anti-roll bar	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, leaf springs, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	18.5:1	15.6:1	16.0:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	3.2	3.1	3.0
BRAKES, F; R	13.8-in vented disc; 13.7-in vented disc, ABS	12.6-in vented disc; 13.0-in disc, ABS	13.8-in vented disc; 13.6-in vented disc, ABS
WHEELS	8.5 x 20-in cast aluminum	8.0 x 18-in cast aluminum	8.0 x 18-in steel; ***8.0 x 20-in cast aluminum***
TIRES	275/55R20 113T (M+S) Hankook Dynapro AT-M	245/60R18 105H (M+S) Firestone Destination LE2	265/70R18 114 (M+S) Toyo Open CountryA26; ***275/60R20 114S (M+S) Goodyear Wrangler SR-A***
DIMENSIONS			
WHEELBASE	145.0 in	125.2 in	139.8 in
TRACK, F/R	67.6/67.6 in	66.1/66.0 in	67.9/67.9; ***68.1/68.1 in***
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	231.9 x 79.9 x 77.2 in	210.0 x 78.6 x 70.8 in	228.1 x 79.5 x 75.1 in
TURNING CIRCLE, CURB-TO-CURB	47.8 ft	44.4 ft	48.2 ft (wall-to-wall)
CURB WEIGHT	5,521 lb	4,510 lb	5,404; **5,927;** *5,974 lb*
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	57/43%	58/42%	60/40; ***57/43%***
SEATING CAPACITY	5	5	3; ***5 pass***
HEADROOM, F/R	40.8/40.4 in	39.5/38.8 in	41.0/40.4 in
LEGROOM, F/R	43.9/43.6 in	40.9/36.7 in	41.8/38.5 in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/R	66.7/65.9 in	62.0/61.5 in	63.3/63.6 in
CARGO BOX VOLUME	52.8 cu ft	34.2 cu ft (+7.3 cu ft in-bed trunk)	72.6; ***49.8 cu ft***
PICKUP BOX L X W X H	67.1 x 63.5 x 21.4 in	64.0 x 60.0 x 15.4 in	97.7 x 61.7 x 20.8; ***67.0 x 61.7 x 20.8 in***
WIDTH BET WHEELHOUSES	50.6 in	50.0 in	50.0 in
PAYLOAD CAPACITY	2,060 lb	1,499 lb	1,896; **1,373;** *1,326 lb*
TOWING CAPACITY	11,500 lb	5,000 lb	9,560; ***9,230 lb***
TEST DATA			
ACCELERATION TO MPH			
0-30	2.3 sec	2.7 sec	2.4; **2.5;** *2.6 sec*
0-40	3.3	3.9	3.5; **3.7;** *3.8*
0-50	4.6	5.5	4.9; **5.1;** *5.2*
0-60	6.1	7.3	6.5; **6.8;** *6.9*
0-70	8.0	9.7	8.6; **9.1;** *9.2*
0-80	10.2	12.3	11.0; **11.6;** *11.7*
0-90	13.0	16.1	13.6; **14.3;** *14.4*
0-100	16.5	–	18.0; **19.0;** –
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	3.1	3.7	3.3; **3.5;** *3.5*
QUARTER MILE	14.7 sec @ 95.0 mph	15.7 sec @ 89.1 mph	15.0 sec @ 93.9 mph; **15.3 sec @ 92.7 mph;** *15.4 sec @ 92.9 mph*
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	121 ft	129 ft	125; **126;** *123 ft*
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.77 g (avg)	0.78 g (avg)	0.74; **0.74;** *0.72 g (avg)*
MT FIGURE EIGHT	27.8 sec @ 0.63 g (avg)	28.0 sec @ 0.61 g (avg)	28.7 sec @ 0.60 g (avg); **28.5 sec @ 0.60 g (avg);** *28.3 sec @ 0.59 g (avg)*
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,400 rpm	1,750 rpm	1,400; ***1,500 rpm***
CONSUMER INFO			
BASE PRICE	$58,455	$42,270	$32,000 (est); **$50,655;** *$56,595*
PRICE AS TESTED	$63,610	$42,270	$32,000 (est); **$51,015;** *$56,595*
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front/side/curtain, dual front, front side, f/r curtain
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles	3 yrs/36,000 miles	5 yrs/100,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	5 yrs/60,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles	5 yrs/100,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	5 yrs/60,000 miles	Not offered	3 yrs/36,000 miles
FUEL CAPACITY	36.0 gal	19.5 gal	26.0 gal
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	17.1/21.1/18.7 mpg	16.5/25.8/19.7 mpg	12.6/19.2/14.9; **not tested;** *12.4/18.4/14.5 mpg*
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	17/23/20 mpg	18/25/21 mpg	15/21/18 mpg
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	198/147 kW-hrs/100 miles	187/135 kW-hrs/100 miles	225/160 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	1.01 lb/mile	0.94 lb/mile	1.13 lb/mile
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded premium	Unleaded regular	Unleaded regular

Like my first "real" bike

Smooth ride

Aluminum use

Bigger than pilot

The little one is quickest

14-sec 1/4 Mile!

Best full size truck warranty

For shame

2016 Nissan Titan XD 4x4 Platinum Reserve V8	**2017 Ram 2500** SLT 4x4 Off Road 6.4, **2016 Ram 3500 Limited 4x4 Cummins**
Front-engine, 4WD	Front-engine, 4WD
90-deg V-8, alum block/heads	90-deg V-8, iron block/alum heads; **turbodiesel I-6, iron block/head**
DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	OHV, 2 valves/cyl; **OHV, 4 valves/cyl**
338.8 cu in/5,552cc	391.6 cu in/6,417cc/ 408.2 cu in/6,690cc
11.2:1	10.0:1; **16.2:1**
390 hp @ 5,800 rpm	410 hp @ 5,600 rpm; **385 hp @ 2,800 rpm**
401 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm	429 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm; **900 lb-ft @ 1,700 rpm**
6,300 rpm	Not indicated; **3,200 rpm**
17.5 lb/hp	18.2; **22.4 lb/hp**
7-speed automatic	6-speed automatic
3.36:1/2.60:1/2.72:1	4.10:1/2.58:1/2.64:1
Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, leaf springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; live axle, air/leaf springs, anti-roll bar
19.0:1 Slow steering	15.6:1; **15.3:1**
3.8	3.2; **3.3** Strong!
14.2-in vented disc; 14.4-in vented disc, ABS	14.2-in vented disc; 14.1-in vented, disc, ABS
7.5 x 20-in cast aluminum	8.0 x 18-in cast aluminum; **6.0 x 17-in forged aluminum**
LT265/60R20 121/118R (M+S) General Grabber HTS	275/70R18 125/122S (M+S) Firestone Transforce AT; **235/80R17 120/117R (M+S) Nexen Roadian HTX RH5**
151.6 in	160.0; **169.3 in**
68.6/68.6 in	68.3/68.2; **69.5/75.8 in**
242.7 x 80.7 x 78.8 in	248.4 x 79.1 x 78.3; **259.3 x 96.4 x 78.9 in**
53.8 ft (wall-to-wall)	47.7; **53.0 ft**
6,840 lb	7,466; **8,628 lb**
56/44%	56/44; **59/41%**
5	5
41.0/40.4 in	41.0/40.3 in
41.8/38.5 in	41.0/43.3 in
63.3/63.6 in	66.0/65.7 in
57.8 cu ft	61.1 cu ft
77.8 x 61.7 x 20.8 in	76.0 x 66.4 x 20.2 in
50.0 in	51.0 in
1,810 lb	2,544; **5,372 lb**
11,000 lb	15,630; **21,440 lb**
2.4 sec	2.8; **2.9 sec**
3.8	4.2; **4.5**
5.3	6.2; **6.4**
7.4	8.3; **8.6**
9.7	10.6; **11.5**
12.4	13.7; **14.9** Why get the gas engine?
16.8	17.3; **19.3**
21.6 The effect of XD weight & gears	–; **25.2**
4.1	4.2; **4.6**
15.7 sec @ 87.5 mph	16.2 sec @ 87.3 mph; **16.6 sec @ 84.0 mph**
124 ft	136; **134 ft**
0.75 g (avg)	0.71; **0.69 g (avg)**
28.2 sec @ 0.60 g (avg)	29.7 sec @ 0.54 g (avg); **30.0 sec @ 0.55 g (avg)**
1,700 rpm	1,600; **1,700 rpm**
$56,715	$48,030; **$69,610**
$57,110	$54,335; **$76,540**
Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain
5 yrs/100,000 miles	3 yrs/36,000 miles
5 yrs/100,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
3 yrs/36,000 miles	5 yrs/100,000 miles
26.0 gal	31.0; **32.0 gal**
11.6/16.0/13.2 mpg Ouch!	9.2/15.9/11.4; **13.3/17.3/14.8 mpg**
Not rated	Not rated
Not rated	Not rated
Not rated	Not rated
Unleaded regular	Unleaded regular; **diesel**

TRUCK OF THE YEAR

ROAD TEST NOTES

F-150: This is the first truck in the world with a 10-speed transmission. What's more, Ford co-developed it with General Motors. #frenemies

Honda Ridgeline: Is this really just a Pilot with an open bed? Nope! Peel the rubber stripping behind the cab, and there is daylight. Plus there is an expansion joint where the bedrail meets the cab.

Nissan Titan: Single-cab, 8-foot bed, bench seat, made in Mississippi, brand logo looks like a hamburger. Can you get more American that that?

Titan XD: The Nissan has larger brakes—14.2-inch front and 14.4-inch rear ventilated discs—than the equivalent 250/2500 domestic trucks.

Ram 2500/3500: RamBox lockable cargo management system is great for hauling smaller items you don't want sliding around (or stolen), but it narrows usable carrying space in the bed.

LEGEND

Notably **GOOD**

Notably **POOR**

When Precision Crafted Performance is at the heart of everything you do, you don't just build an SUV, you build the SUV you want to drive. With available track-refined Super Handling All-Wheel Drive™ and an Integrated Dynamics System that delivers three unique drive modes, the 2017 MDX does more than just embody what Precision Crafted Performance is all about—it defines it.

Check out the reimagined 2017 MDX at acura.com/mdx

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ACURA
PRECISION CRAFTED PERFORMANCE

REFINED

MDX

POWER LIST

50 Olivier François

FCA

FCA CHIEF MARKING OFFICER, HEAD OF THE FIAT BRAND

2016 Rank: 22 François has made waves over the years by pulling off the near-impossible, such as getting Eminem to star in a Super Bowl commercial and supporting strong sales even when products got a bit thin. His formula for success has become so consistent it is easy to forget to be wowed by the big names he convinces to come onboard. But the Fiat side of his duties is not running as smoothly, as the brand has failed to grow and thrive.

49 John Malone

Liberty Media

CHAIRMAN

2016 Rank: Unranked

Although perhaps best known as owner of the Atlanta Braves, billionaire John Malone has a reputation for being a savvy and ruthless investor in media and telecoms businesses. Which makes his company's $4.4 billion acquisition of the 35.5 percent share of F1, owned by Luxembourg-based investment fund CVC, an interesting move. F1 has had lackluster viewership in the U.S. compared with other markets. But with Bernie Ecclestone, the man who made F1 a global money machine, now 86 years old, might Malone be positioning himself to be the next F1 czar?

Words Angus MacKenzie and Alisa Priddle **Illustrations** David Kiss

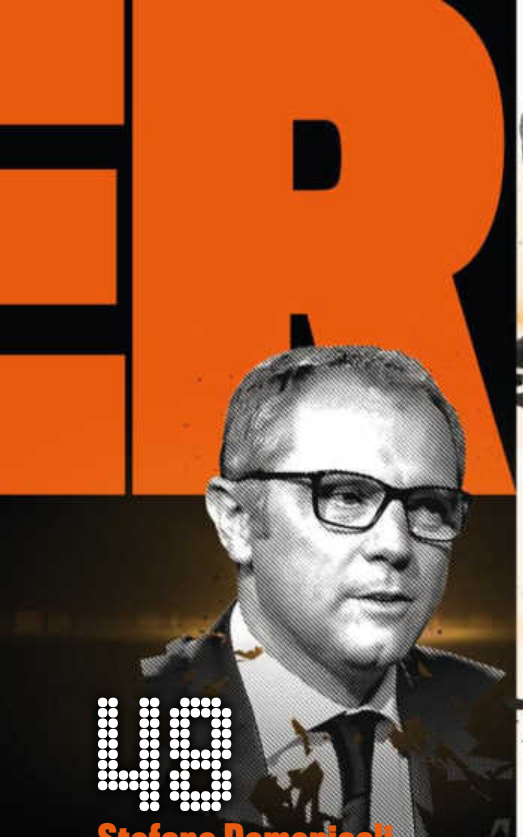
49 OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY'S TOP PLAYERS, PLUS OUR PERSON OF THE YEAR

Introduced in 2005, the *Motor Trend* Power List recognizes those who have most made a difference in the automotive industry during the previous year. These are the people who have helped create, engineer, and market the cars, trucks, and SUVs we love to drive, the people who have entertained us, engaged us, and, yes, sometimes enraged us.

We recognized that, inevitably, automaker CEOs tended to hog the upper echelons of the list. So we changed things up a little last year, reworking the top 10 places to recognize those who have had the most impact on the industry over the past 12 months in terms of design, engineering, brand development, performance, product development, and overall company management. And because this fascinating industry never stops evolving, we've nominated our top disrupter, outsider, and futurist, too.

At the top of our list is our Person of the Year, the individual we believe has had the most impact on the industry during the year.

Perhaps because the automobile is now well into its second century as a consumer product, we tend to take it for granted. It's easy to forget that the car is the machine that changed the world, shaped our cities and our lives, and made those generations who lived in the 20th century the most mobile and most free in history. But over the coming decade, as the industry moves into the production of autonomous vehicles, this machine is going to change our world again. Profoundly. These are the people who will make that happen.



49 Stefano Domenicali

Lamborghini

CEO

2016 Rank: Unranked The former head of Ferrari's Formula 1 program took over the top job at Lamborghini in March with huge shoes to fill after former CEO Stephan Winkelmann doubled sales and tripled revenue during his tenure. Domenicali will oversee the introduction of Lambo's first SUV since the LM002.

47 Ken Block

PROFESSIONAL RACING DRIVER

2016 Rank: 32

It doesn't matter if he jumps the shark—or does donuts around it. Block's stunts are becoming more predictable yet also more insane. He shows no signs of losing his millions of followers on YouTube or his Gymkhana partnership with Ford, which draws an all-important young audience. You know you've made it when millions watch parody videos of your antics.

48 John Krafcik

Google

CEO, GOOGLE SELF-DRIVING CARS

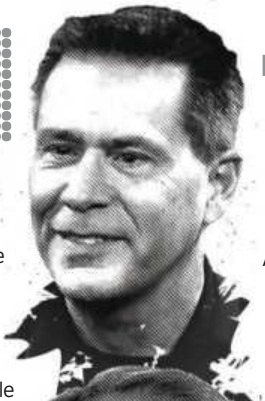
2016 Rank: 49 Krafcik took Hyundai's U.S. operations from irrelevance to contention during his tenure as CEO. His impact on the industry could prove to be bigger in his current role with Google's Self-Driving Cars project. With the race to autonomous vehicles in full force, Krafcik has the advantage of working with the company that was first to have a visible test fleet of autonomous cars on the road. The tougher task: overseeing the implementation of Google's technology in for-public-consumption vehicles. He also must bounce back from losing Chris Urmson, the engineer who nurtured the project from infancy.

46 Michelle Christensen

Acura

EXTERIOR DESIGN LEADER, ACURA NSX

2016 Rank: Unranked Christensen has had a supercharged career. She graduated from ArtCenter design school in 2005 and quickly led the controversial Acura ZDX crossover coupe's exterior design before being tapped in 2012 to tackle the much-anticipated successor to the legendary Acura NSX. Her designs have injected real excitement back into the moribund Acura brand. One wonders what she will do when put in charge of styling a mass-market vehicle.

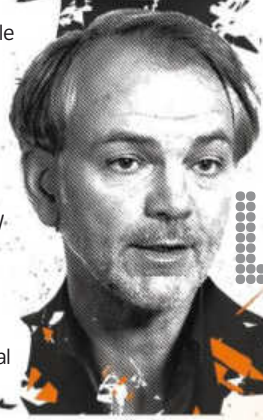


44 Russ Ruedisueli

FCA

DIRECTOR, SRT AND MOTORSPORTS ENGINEERING, FCA GROUP

2016 Rank: 45 The man behind the 707-hp Hellcats made Dodge and SRT cool again. The public was reminded that FCA still makes the Dodge Charger and Challenger. Sales of the Charger were only up slightly last year, but the aging Challenger jumped almost 30 percent. The question is whether Ruedisueli can sprinkle his engineering magic on other FCA products.



43 Adrian van Hooydonk

BMW

GROUP CHIEF DESIGNER

2016 Rank: 29 The man who took over from Chris Bangle, van Hooydonk has guided BMW to a less polarizing design philosophy. But his BMW, Rolls Royce, and Mini Vision 100 concepts are far from sterile. The concepts were designed to make the sheetmetal one with the driver. A glimpse of the real van Hooydonk, perhaps?

42 Gina McCarthy

Environmental Protection Agency

ADMINISTRATOR

2016 Rank: 34 The EPA was blindsided by Volkswagen's cheating scandal, and McCarthy and her staff are looking at how to prevent infractions from recurring. She was key in the negotiations that require VW to pay up to $15.9 billion. Should she continue under a new president, she must be ready for pressure from automakers; achieving 2025 CAFE standards of 54.5 mpg does not look possible.

41 Nick Rogers

Jaguar Land Rover

ENGINEERING DIRECTOR

2016 Rank: Unranked Now in his fourth decade in the industry, Rogers started his career as an apprentice body engineer with British Leyland. As the state-owned automaker lurched from crisis to crisis, Rogers worked with Honda, BMW, and Ford, eventually becoming chief engineer for the current Range Rover. He takes the top engineering job at JLR as the company moves to keep the sales momentum by launching an all-new Defender and Discovery model lines and develops a small Jaguar SUV to capitalize on the success of the F-Pace.

40 Herbert Diess

Volkswagen

CHAIRMAN, VOLKSWAGEN PASSENGER CARS

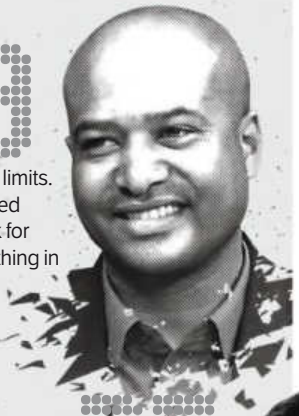
2016 Rank: 35 Diess is the man in the middle of the Dieselgate maelstrom. In July he said he would not step down despite coming under investigation in Germany as to whether VW took too long to inform shareholders of the potential financial fallout. Diess is trying to recast VW as a maker of electric vehicles.

40 Ralph Gilles

FCA

HEAD OF DESIGN

2016 Rank: 40 Gilles' passion knows no limits. A performance freak, he ceaselessly hyped the Viper, but he also has a special knack for minivan design—and pretty much everything in between. As he sits on the group executive council, which makes all product decisions, Gilles is one of the most powerful designers in the industry.



39 Shiro Nakamura

Nissan

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

2016 Rank: 33 The longtime design chief is working to redefine the Infiniti luxury brand, starting with the QX30 hatchback and the Mexico-sourced QX50 SUV that will debut Infiniti's radical new 2.0-liter variable-compression turbo engine. Then comes the striking Q70 sedan, a rakish-looking car that's essentially a four-door coupe. His goal: classic but not retro.

38 Franz von Holzhausen

Tesla Motors

SENIOR DESIGN EXECUTIVE

2016 Rank: 37 Von Holzhausen's Model S was a home run, a sinewy electric car that didn't look frumpy. The Model X successfully riffed on the Model S' design theme, but as an SUV it's a miss: too much gimmickry and not enough made of the opportunities for uniquely space-efficient packaging afforded by the electric powertrain. His design for the Model 3, which features a panoramic glass roof, is also controversial.

37 Andy Palmer

Aston Martin

PRESIDENT AND CEO

2016 Rank: Unranked

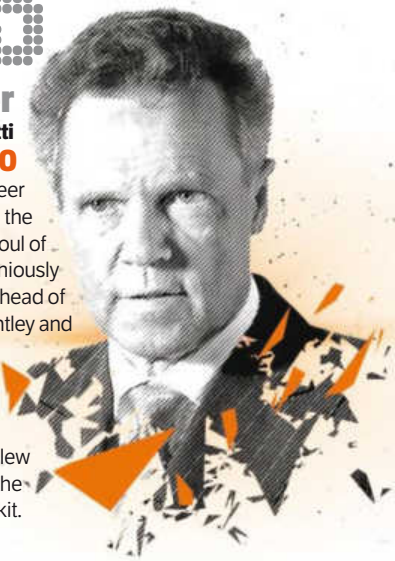
Once Carlos Ghosn's key product guy at Nissan and Infiniti, Palmer says he couldn't pass up the opportunity to run the charismatic boutique that is Aston Martin. He's proven adept at keeping Aston in the headlines by rolling out expensive limited-run models such as the Vulcan, buying time until the all-new DB11 replaced the aging DB9 in 2016. And he's persuaded investors to fund a plan that sees Vanquish and Vantage replacements and a new crossover that Aston hopes will double sales.

36 Wolfgang Dürheimer

Bentley, Bugatti

CHAIRMAN AND CEO

2016 Rank: Unranked Dürheimer's career took an unscheduled detour when the former head of Porsche R&D fell afoul of VW Group politics and was unceremoniously removed from his subsequent role as head of Audi R&D. Now he's back as CEO of Bentley and Bugatti, the very jobs he had before the Audi gig. And he's loving it. Over the next few years he gets to launch the Bugatti Chiron (the world's fastest car, anticipated to go 288 mph) and a slew of gorgeous new Bentleys built using the new VW Group MSB toolkit.



35 Sergio Marchionne

FCA, Ferrari

CHAIRMAN AND CEO

2016 Rank: 20 The chief of FCA and Ferrari has been regarded as the smartest man in the room but also dismissed for not being a car guy. Marchionne is certainly smart, and he has a work ethic that would kill most mortals. But there are signs the wheels are falling off FCA, which still has too many brands and not enough money to invest in them. The tough-guy business-school rhetoric is still there, but there's a growing edge of desperation in the tone these days.

34 Sheri Hickok

GM

EXECUTIVE CHIEF ENGINEER OF AUTONOMOUS JOINT VENTURES AND FLEET EXECUTION

2016 Rank: 36 After engineering GM's full-size pickups, Hickok was promoted once again to work on a project that is a priority of CEO Mary Barra: autonomous vehicles. Hickock is now working on GM's self-driving vehicle fleet as well as with joint ventures and partnerships to further this work. This makes her an important cog in the future of GM and the industry.

33

32 Gerry McGovern

Land Rover

CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

2016 Rank: 23

McGovern continues his transformation of Land Rovers into the world's most stylish SUVs. With the new Land Rover Discovery replacing the long-running LR4, nearly every vehicle in the lineup now bears his stamp. Now comes the biggest challenge of his career: replacing the iconic 68-year-old Defender with not one but a family of Land Rovers that channel its utilitarian charm in a thoroughly modern manner.

Mark Fields

Ford **CEO** **2016 Rank: 15** The Ford CEO has been a firm guide since succeeding Alan Mulally. Fields has tried to make his mark by recycling former CEO Jac Nasser's late-'90s idea that Ford is a mobility company—setting up an innovation center in Palo Alto and trying to claim leadership in autonomous vehicles and ride-sharing initiatives. But a lack of visibility has turned off Wall Street, and Ford stock has fallen since Fields took over in 2014 even though he has achieved strong sales and record profits.

31

Mike Manley

FCA

HEAD OF JEEP AND RAM BRANDS; CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER ASIA

30

2016 Rank: 24 Manley oversees FCA's money-makers: the Jeep and Ram brands and FCA's Asian expansion. It's a huge portfolio of responsibilities that has him crisscrossing the globe almost as much as his boss, Sergio Marchionne. Manley is a quiet, driven, no-nonsense executive who is also a member of FCA's Group Executive Council and a strong contender to eventually replace Marchionne as CEO.

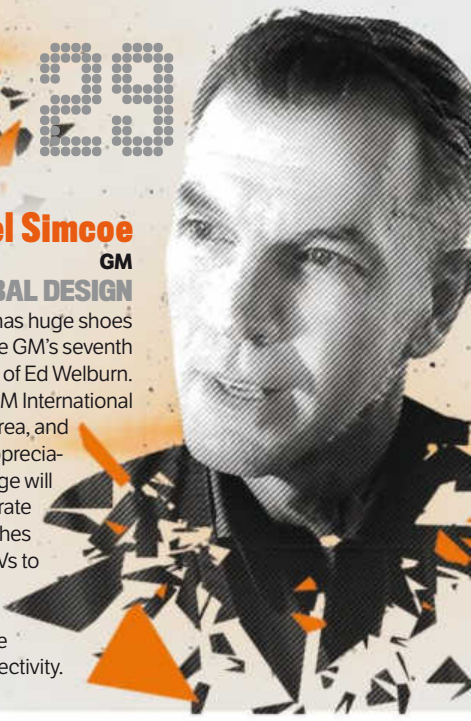
Michael Simcoe

GM

VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL DESIGN

29

2016 Rank: Unranked Simcoe has huge shoes to fill. The Australian became GM's seventh design chief with the retirement of Ed Welburn. His last position was head of GM International Design based in Australia and Korea, and he approaches design with an appreciation for engineering. The challenge will be to mesh sometimes disparate priorities as GM launches everything from EVs to full-size pickups, with greater emphasis on lightweight materials, alternative powertrains, and connectivity.



28

Tim Kuniskis

FCA

HEAD OF PASSENGER CAR BRANDS, DODGE, SRT, CHRYSLER, AND FIAT

2016 Rank: 28 Kuniskis has kept Dodge relevant, elevating the status of the performance brand with its headline-grabbing Hellcats. He also has a success on his hands with the Chrysler Pacifica. But he faces the challenge of selling FCA's small cars when the Dart and 200 have been busts. He also must bolster Fiat's lagging sales while orchestrating the relaunch of Alfa Romeo.

Dan Ammann

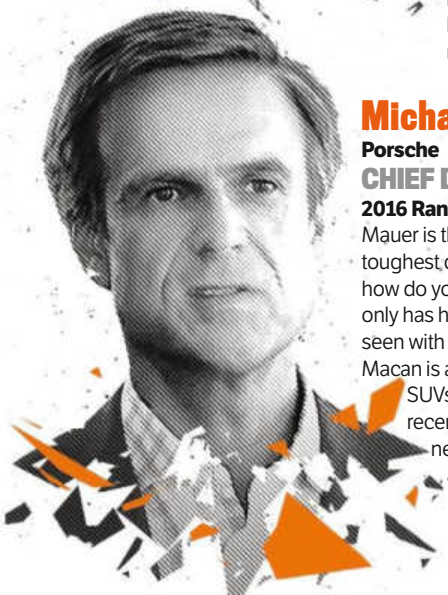
GM

PRESIDENT

27

2016 Rank: 17

As a number cruncher, Dan Ammann's directives can be controversial—like killing nameplates while giving Cadillac a lot of rope. But the mix of strong financials and products suggest his methods are working. He is now pushing autonomous cars, ride-sharing, and other initiatives that CEO Mary Barra has made a priority.



Michael Mauer

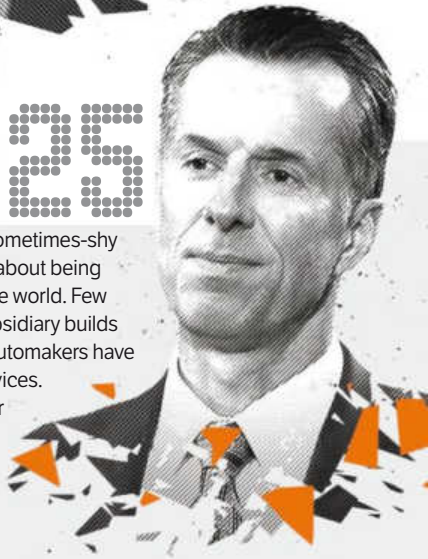
Porsche

CHIEF DESIGNER

26

2016 Rank: Unranked

Mauer is the man with arguably the toughest design job in the auto industry—how do you keep reinventing the 911? Not only has he carried that off with aplomb, as seen with the 991 models, but his Porsche Macan is also one of the sportiest compact SUVs on the planet. Mauer's most recent tour de force, though, is the new Panamera. The original was an oddball hunchback. The new one is drop-dead gorgeous.



Donald Walker

Magna

CEO

25

2016 Rank: Unranked The sometimes-shy Canadian company does not boast about being the second-largest parts maker in the world. Few outsiders realize its Magna Steyr subsidiary builds vehicles in Graz, Austria, but many automakers have used its contract manufacturing services. Magna is currently deciding whether to add a second vehicle assembly plant in Eastern Europe, establish its first contract manufacturing plant in North America, and make electric vehicles in China.

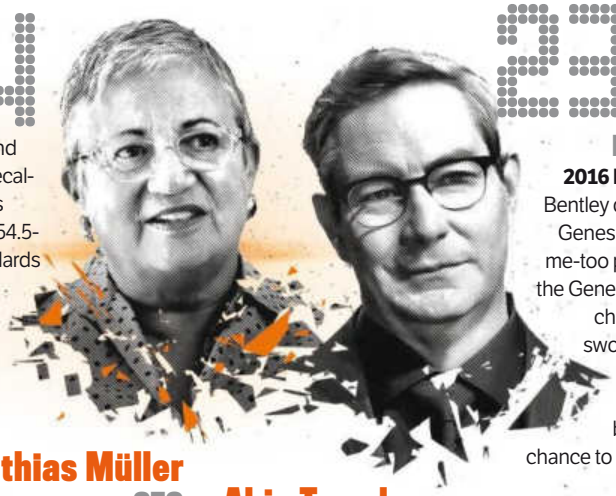
Mary Nichols

California Air Resources Board

CHAIRWOMAN

24

2016 Rank: 8, The Outsider CARB, the EPA, and NHTSA issued a draft report that may result in recalculating proposed fuel economy and emissions targets for 2025. Nichols' clout could mean the 54.5-mpg and 35 percent emissions-reduction standards are only slightly reduced rather than gutted.

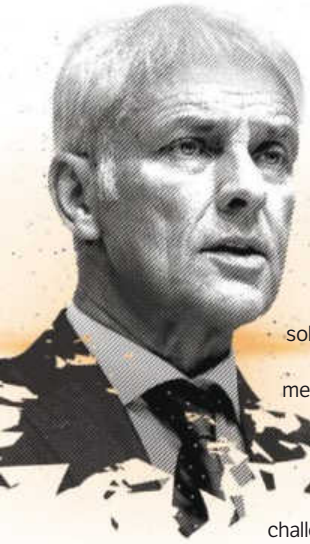


Luc Donckerwolke

Hyundai HEAD, HYUNDAI MOTOR DESIGN CENTER, PRESTIGE DESIGN DIVISION

23

2016 Rank: 38 The former Lamborghini and Bentley design chief is in charge of making the Genesis brand's styling noticeable in a sea of me-too premium vehicles. The lineup includes the Genesis G80 and the larger G90; the bigger challenge will be to take the bones of the swoopy New York Concept to the production version of the G70. It's not every day you get to launch a luxury brand, but Donckerwolke and Genesis have a chance to redefine the look of premium vehicles.



Matthias Müller

Volkswagen AG CEO

22

2016 Rank: 18 In the unenviable position of succeeding Martin Winterkorn as CEO of Volkswagen following the diesel scandal, Matthias Müller has soldiered on amid investigations, lawsuits, criticism, and mounting costs to fix the mess. He has to defend decisions to handsomely compensate buyers in North America but not in Germany. As fixes become approved and are executed, Müller's tougher longer-term challenge is restoring faith in the VW brands.

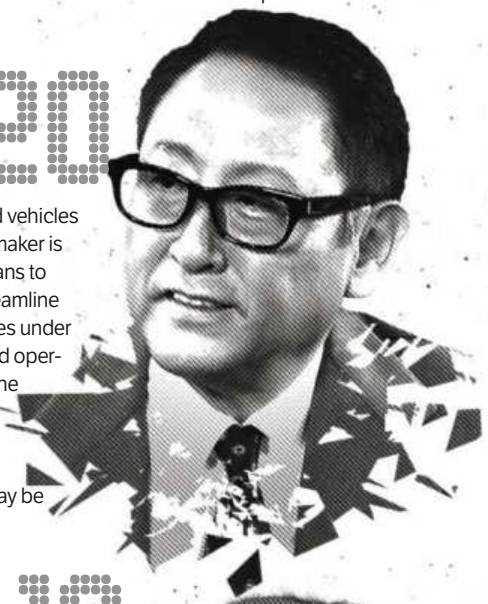
Akio Toyoda

Toyota

CEO AND PRESIDENT

20

2016 Rank: 13 Toyota has made some big changes. It killed the Scion youth brand after a 15-year run and redistributed vehicles across other brands. And the automaker is making inroads on its ambitious plans to reduce its global platforms and streamline manufacturing costs and efficiencies under the TNGA platform. But revenue and operating income are expected to decline for the 2017 fiscal year, and Toyoda approvedthe highly polarizing Lexus, Mirai, and Prius styling that even the most loyal insiders fear may be damaging the brand.



Dave Pericak

Ford Performance

DIRECTOR

21

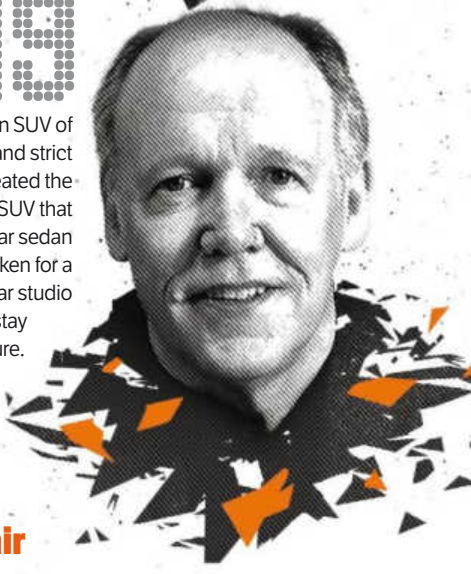
2016 Rank: 19 The global rollout of the Mustang was a warm-up, albeit a huge one, to the big show: the Ford GT that went on sale in late 2016, less than two years since the concept was first unveiled and just months after its triumphant return to the 24 Hours of Le Mans. The Mustang and GT are but two of 12 new performance vehicles Ford will introduce by 2020, including the debut of the Focus RS on our shores. Collectively, they are helping to raise the profile of the Blue Oval.

Ian Callum Jaguar

DIRECTOR OF DESIGN

19

2016 Rank: 25 Jaguar had its critics when it announced it would enter partner Land Rover's turf with, gasp, an SUV of its own. But Callum's eye for luxury and strict adherence to Jaguar's DNA created the sporty and glamorous F-Pace, an SUV that somehow incorporates iconic Jaguar sedan styling and that will never be mistaken for a Land Rover. Meanwhile, the busy Jaguar studio also created the XE and XF sedans, which stay loyal to Jaguar tenets while looking to the future.



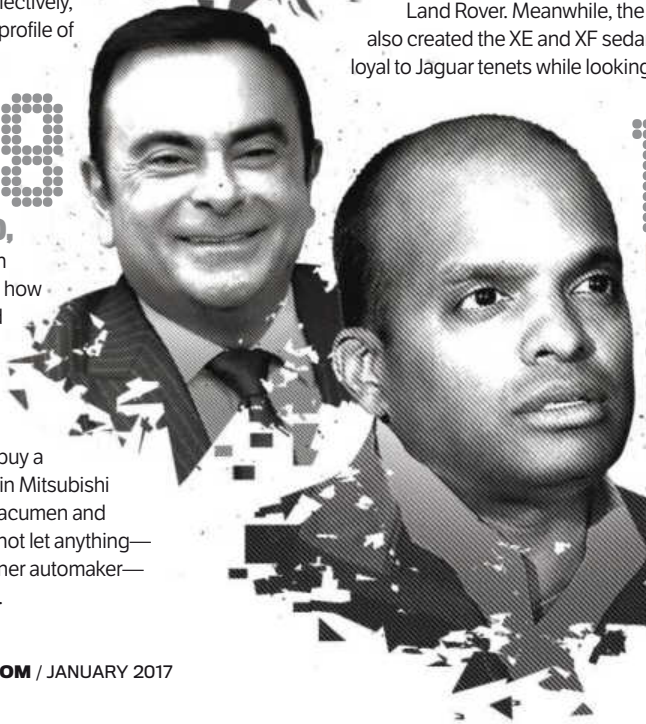
Carlos Ghosn

Renault/Nissan

CHAIRMAN AND CEO,

18

2016 Rank: 12 Carlos Ghosn continues to show the world how to run a successfully merged company with global platforms and continued cost savings providing the capital to keep cars like the GT-R fresh. The proposal to buy a controlling 34 percent stake in Mitsubishi shows his shrewd business acumen and unfettered determination to not let anything—including a scandal at a partner automaker—stand in the way of business.



Raj Nair

Ford

CHIEF TECHNICAL OFFICER AND HEAD OF GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

17

2016 Rank: 16 Raj Nair is a driving force behind a push to performance vehicles and injecting better performance into regular vehicles. He is as passionate about the Ford GT and F-150 Raptor as he is about developing autonomous vehicles. Nair is also overseeing the continued development of turbocharged engines, nine- and 10-speed transmissions, and the use of lighter materials, all while keeping Ford in the sales hunt with a strong lineup of crossovers and pickups.

POWER LIST 2017

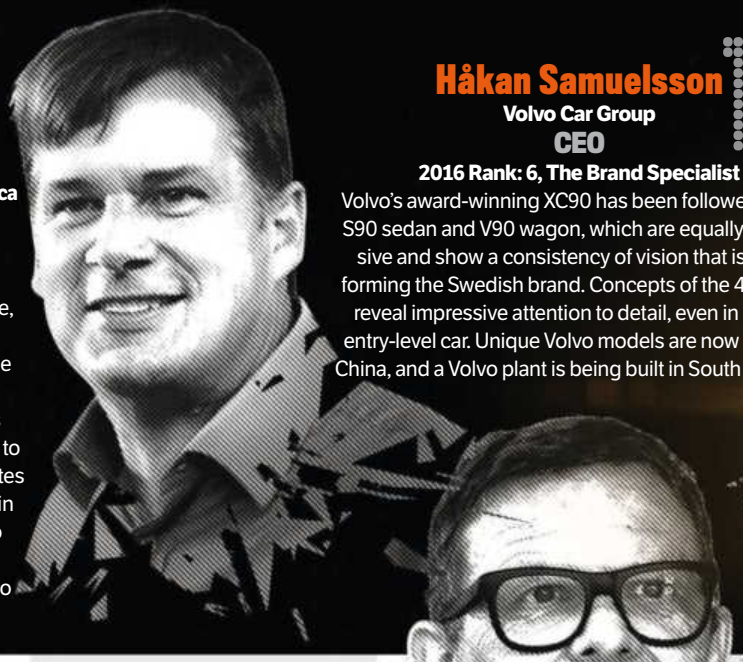
16 Jim Farley

Ford Europe, Middle East, and Africa

PRESIDENT

2016 Rank: Unranked

When Jim Farley was sent to oversee struggling Ford of Europe, he was viewed by some as the new captain on the Titanic. But the out-of-the-box thinker has sailed the division into profitable waters and is crafting a product strategy to compete against luxury nameplates without a luxury brand of its own in the market. And in a move dear to his heart, he has added Mustang and other performance vehicles to the European sales platter.



15 Håkan Samuelsson

Volvo Car Group

CEO

2016 Rank: 6, The Brand Specialist

Volvo's award-winning XC90 has been followed by the S90 sedan and V90 wagon, which are equally impressive and show a consistency of vision that is transforming the Swedish brand. Concepts of the 40 Series reveal impressive attention to detail, even in a small entry-level car. Unique Volvo models are now made in China, and a Volvo plant is being built in South Carolina.

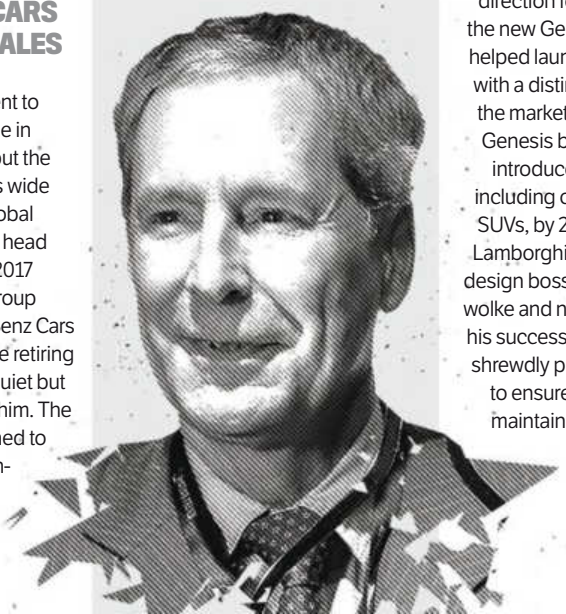
14 Ola Källenius

Daimler

MEMBER OF THE DAIMLER BOARD OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBLE FOR MERCEDES-BENZ CARS MARKETING AND SALES

2016 ranking: Unranked

Källenius is the heir apparent to Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche in 2020. He may be only 46, but the road to the top job appears wide open. Mercedes-Benz's global sales grew on his watch as head of marketing and sales. In 2017 he takes over as head of Group Research and Mercedes-Benz Cars Development, replacing the retiring Thomas Weber. He has a quiet but compelling manner about him. The automaker is also determined to stay on the forefront of technology for electrified and autonomous vehicles.



13 Thomas Doll

Subaru of America

CEO

2016 Rank: 1, *Motor Trend* Person of the Year

Last year Thomas Doll catapulted from a No. 42 ranking to our *Motor Trend* Person of the Year for steadily guiding an automaker that knows its product and loyal customer. Subaru has built an image around pet-friendly, affordable all-wheel-drive cars that make those who drive them look smart. Sales in the U.S. market grew 13 percent to more than half a million last year and were pacing up a further 4 percent through the first nine months of 2016—double the industry rate. That's quite the feat given Subaru doesn't sell a single truck.

12 Peter Schreyer

Hyundai

PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DESIGN OFFICER

2016 Rank: 3, The Designer

Success breeds more responsibility. For Schreyer, it means he now oversees the design direction for Hyundai, Kia, and the new Genesis luxury brand he helped launch in January—each with a distinct look and place in the marketplace. The fledgling Genesis brand is expected to introduce six new vehicles, including cars, crossovers, and SUVs, by 2021. In hiring former Lamborghini and Bentley design boss Luc Donckerwolke and nominating him as his successor, Schreyer has also shrewdly put in place a strategy to ensure the momentum is maintained once he retires.

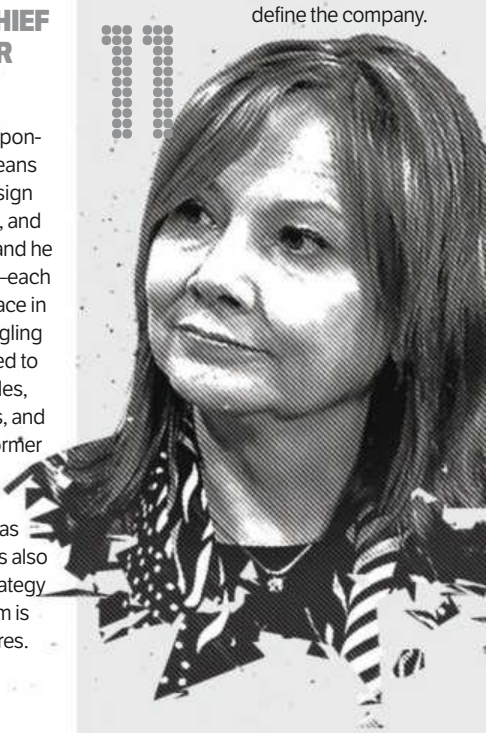
11 Mary Barra

GM

CHAIRMAN AND CEO

2016 Rank: 11

Barra took the top job at GM in January 2014, but she was able to make her mark on the company in dealing with the ignition switch crisis. Starting 2016 by adding the title of chairman, she has worked to create a vision for the company that embraces electric vehicles, ride-sharing, and autonomous vehicles without losing sight of the core cars and trucks that generate profits and define the company.



10 THE DISRUPTORS
Jeremy Clarkson and Andy Wilman
The Grand Tour
PRESENTER AND EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

2016 Rank: Unranked They worked together to turn an old-school BBC motoring program into a global television phenomenon, Clarkson the star in front of the camera and Wilman the brains behind it. The Top Gear story ended dramatically in 2015 when Clarkson was fired by the BBC. Mere months later, Clarkson and Wilman stunned the TV industry by announcing a deal said to be worth $200 million to produce 36 hour-long episodes of a new program, The Grand Tour, for ... Amazon. If broadcast and cable TV operators needed proof their cozy world is about to change forever, this single deal was it. And for a show about men behaving badly with cars, no less.

9 THE BRAND SPECIALIST
Johan de Nysschen
Cadillac
PRESIDENT

2016 Rank: 21 The decisions to operate Cadillac as a separate entity with headquarters in New York, to develop distinctive platforms, to target ambitious growth plans, and to raise the price and status of the lineup have raised some eyebrows. But de Nysschen deserves credit for sticking to his convictions of unique sedan platforms and for not using incentives to reverse a U.S. sales slide. He says Cadillac cannot rely on GM charity and must make it or break it on its own. But de Nysschen is firm in his commitment to put Cadillac on par with the German and Japanese luxury brands, and he has the character to drive it.

8 THE FUTURIST
Tim Cook Apple
CEO 2016 Rank: Unranked

The Apple Car: an elusive project shrouded in mystery. Yes, Apple wants to be part of the autonomous car movement—but is it merely as a software provider and owner of the valuable data from millions of lines of code in a vehicle? Recent rumors have swung from Apple buying supercar-maker McLaren to dialing back the program to being a creator of software for any and all automakers. Cook has kept the world guessing with cryptic answers as he hires and fires key people from the automotive world and sets up secret labs and test areas in California and Berlin.

THE PRODUCT DEVELOPER
Mark Reuss GM
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GLOBAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, PURCHASING, AND SUPPLY CHAIN

2016 Rank: 14 Sure, he's a quintessential car guy who loves V-8 Corvettes and Camaro Z/28s, but Reuss is unrelenting in his pursuit of better products across the GM lineup. That includes not just better styling and advanced technology but also embracing a mixed material philosophy to reduce weight and diving headlong into the potential of autonomous driving and ride-sharing. Under his leadership, GM does some things better than the rest of the pack, including infotainment systems and start/stop technology. And the Bolt just beat Tesla to the punch in producing an affordable electric vehicle with an all-day driving range.

7 THE OUTSIDER
Lewis Hamilton
F1 WORLD CHAMPION
2016 Rank: Unranked

Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton spends a lot of the year on the road—and at his pied-à-terre in tony Monaco. But the Brit who grew up on a council estate outside London now calls a luxury ranch in Colorado home. Hamilton is not only the first black driver in F1, but he's also now one of the highest-paid sports stars in the world. Asked last year by *Esquire* about being a black role model, he said he didn't feel a responsibility as such but noted: "When I was racing as a kid, and throughout my entire career, I never ever came across another black family."

POWER LIST 2017

5 THE CEO
Dieter Zetsche
Daimler
CHAIRMAN AND CEO
2016 Rank: 7, The CEO

Under Zetsche, Daimler continues to keep Mercedes fresh and relevant with plans to introduce 30 new vehicles in seven years. The new Mercedes-Benz E-Class is a technological tour de force and a giant step toward autonomous driving. With perfect timing, the automaker has just overhauled its utility vehicles, complete with new names, right as the market is thirsting for crossovers and SUVs. The AMG performance brand is tightly integrated with the three-pointed star, its cars now badged Mercedes-AMG. Zetsche's contract has been renewed through the end of 2019, and he shows no signs of slowing down.

4 THE ENGINEER
Stefano Varisco
Ferrari
HEAD OF VEHICLE DYNAMICS
2016 Rank: Unranked

An accomplished pianist in his spare time, the quietly spoken Varisco is the man responsible for overseeing the development of Ferrari's innovative Side Slip Control vehicle dynamics system, which has helped make cars such as the Ferrari 488 GTB and GTC4Lusso ride and handle so astoundingly well. Under Varisco, Ferrari has made its electronically controlled chassis tuning and driver aids work seamlessly together in real time to deliver a singular vision as to how a modern Ferrari should feel on the road but—critically—without the end result seeming anything other than totally organic to the driver.

3 THE DESIGNER
Robin Page
Volvo
HEAD OF INTERIOR DESIGN

2016 Rank: Unranked Volvo's interior designer was hired away from Bentley, and his skills are evident in the beautiful XC90, our 2016 SUV of the Year, which managed to separate itself from the cookie-cutter look of the growing field of crossover vehicles. The coolly elegant new S90 sedan and V90 wagon are clear departures from the German luxury school. His imagination and execution show no boundaries, evidenced by the glittery playfulness of an Orrefors crystal glass gearshift amid the studied surfaces and sophisticated materials that now define a modern Volvo interior. His next challenge: making his vision work in the new range of smaller Volvo vehicles now under development.

2 THE PERFORMANCE GURU
Tobias Moers
Mercedes-AMG
CEO
2016 Rank: 5, The Hot-Rodder

Moers is leading the transformation of AMG from Mercedes-Benz's in-house tuning shop into the world's most popular performance brand; he's spearheading the development of cars such as the 911-fighting Mercedes-AMG GT S, which won *Motor Trend*'s Best Driver's Car in 2015. And there's more coming, including the high-performance, V-8-powered AMG 63 series versions of standard Mercedes vehicles, the new lineup of V-6-powered AMG-lite 43 series models, and complete AMG car lines such as X290, a family of four-door hatchback coupes. And to celebrate AMG's 50th anniversary next year, Moers wants an AMG hypercar with an F1-inspired hybrid power unit.

Elon Musk CEO TESLA MOTORS 2016 Rank: 26

A charmer and conjurer of dreams, Musk possesses a hypnotic voice and the ability to answer a question as if you are witnessing the answer being formulated in front of you. At times mercurial but also self-deprecating, he creates an intimacy and illusion of transparency rare in a CEO. Musk has cast a spell over tens of thousands of consumers willing to buy his self-professed imperfect products. Lines of would-be Model 3 buyers forked over $1,000 deposits and raised $400 million in instant capital for an electric car no one had seen. And despite some well-chronicled teething problems with the Model X—oh, those falcon doors—the order banks remain strong, and his followers remain true. You can endlessly debate whether Musk is the best or worst thing to happen to the industry, whether Tesla can maintain its capital standing, whether Tesla is actually profitable, or whether it has the capability to leap from manufacturing 50,000 up to 500,000 units in less than a year. Regardless, there is no other company or CEO generating more interest in the industry today. And he does this while running companies that launch rockets into space and attempt to convert America's key energy source to solar.

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TIRE RACK Consumer Recommended

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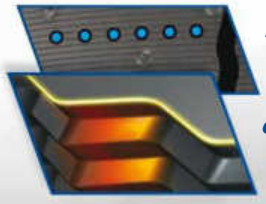

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Aid in foul-weather traction while also improving treadwear and driving precision

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The compound is molded into a directional pattern that features an enlarged contact patch comprised of **arrow-shaped center blocks** and more rounded shoulders to expel water and slush. **High-density 3D sipe technology** improves braking and snow-to-snow traction.

SCORPION™ WINTER

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Sports Cars, Sporty Coupes and Performance Sedans

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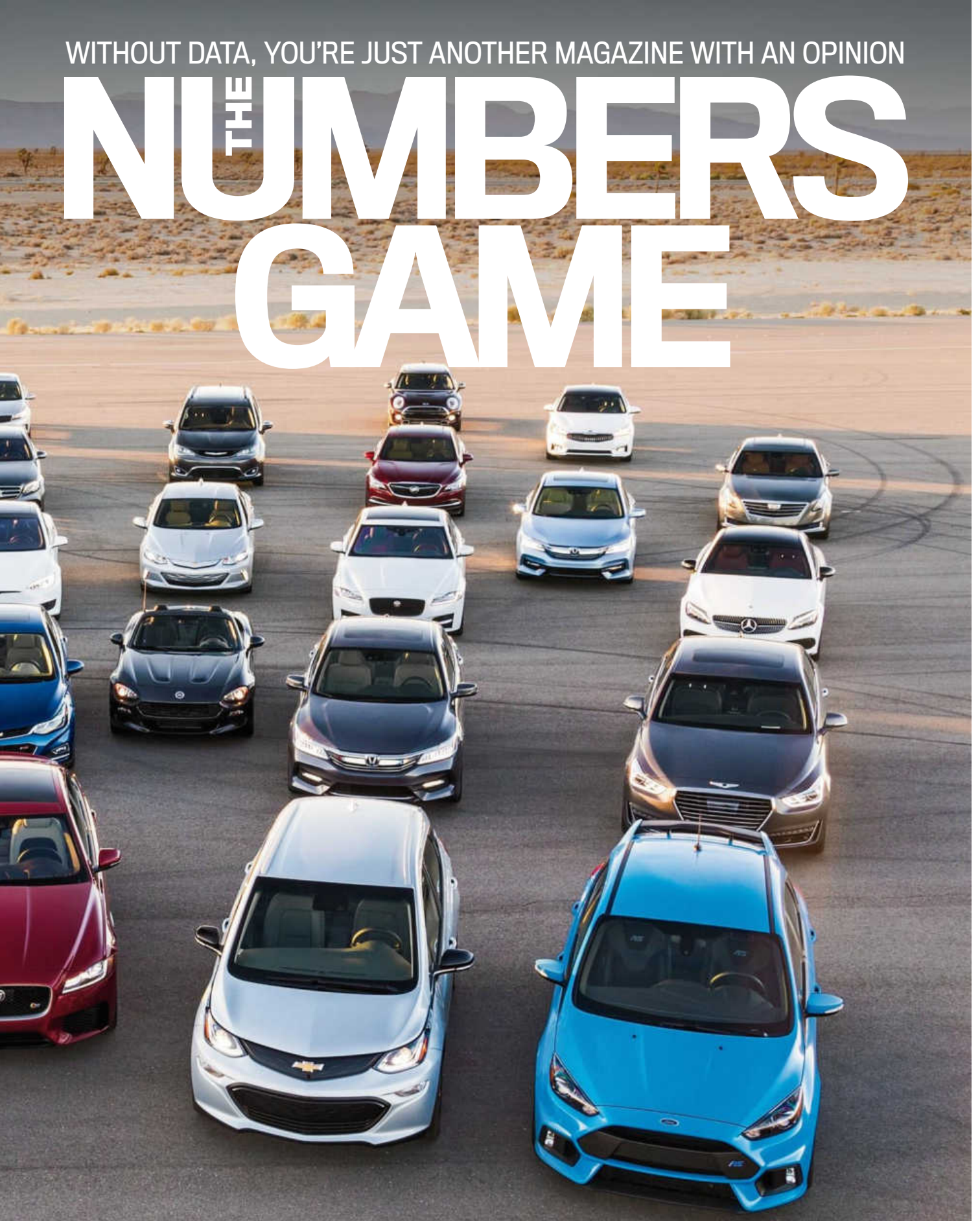
THE NUMBERS GAME



THE LINEUP Audi A4 ■ Buick LaCrosse ■ Cadillac CT6 ■ Chevrolet Bolt ■ Chevrolet Cruze ■ Chevrolet Volt ■ Chrysler Pacifica ■ Fiat 124 ■ Ford Focus ■ Genesis G90 ■ Honda Accord ■ Hyundai Elantra ■ Jaguar XE ■ Jaguar XF ■ Kia Cadenza ■ Kia Forte ■ Mercedes-Benz C-Class ■ Mercedes-Benz E-Class ■ Mini Clubman ■ Porsche 911 ■ Tesla Model S ■ Toyota Prius ■ Volvo S90

To paraphrase the quite-dead St. Augustine of Hippo, "Numbers are the language to confirm the truth." And from where we sit, the old guy may have been on to something. Nowadays, all kinds of insights are being confirmed by what's called Big Data—wherein mountains of digits get fire hosed through brain-boggling supercomputers.

Unfortunately, how we roll is restricted by $600 Dell laptops. But we gleefully overcompensate for this by testing the ever-loving heck out of our field of Car of the Year hopefuls. And why not? Winning this contest means donning the biggest crown any new car gets to wear.

Let's start with those two testing locales—the lab-coat setting of the Hyundai Motor Group desert proving ground in California City (where we wear jeans and T-shirts) and the real-world environs surrounding the nearby settlement of Tehachapi (where everybody wears jeans and T-shirts). Both are tip-top places to test, so it's no wonder that we've been visiting both for a solid decade now. (Special thanks to Hyundai for putting up with us all these years.) This is where our 11 judges congregated to drive our 23 eager contestants (actually 32 when you include significant drivetrain and trim variants) generously provided to us by 18 automotive brands.

To gauge high-speed stability, we circled the test track's 6.4-mile oval for a total of 2,254 miles. While we sussed out ride quality, the lumps and bumps of the facility's special surfaces pavement left 528 miles of thumping and hammering impressions on our bruised buttocks. Fortunately, the track's winding road handling course soothed our pain with a 15-turn asphalt ribbon sprawled over a four-story elevation change. This somehow consumed much more tire tread than its 954 miles of testing would indicate. Several judges left behind considerably more rubber than others.

More numbers: If you total road test editor Chris Walton's quarter-mile launches back to back, he was accelerating—continually—for 40 miles. To stop all that velocity, Chris punished his neck, collarbone, and pelvis with 128 threshold-braking tests (yet somehow held onto his carnitas taco lunches). Meanwhile, over at the figure-eight course I painted the sign of infinity with brush strokes of tire rubber for 60.7 miles—including 24.4 miles of steady-state cornering. I'm still weaving like a sailor after shore leave. At the facility's workshop, the 140-pound Benson Kong supervised the weighing of 59.6 tons of cars.

All of this girded us for two days of looping the 27.6-mile subjective driving route through and around Tehachapi with our finalists. Even with our winnowed field, we still drove a staggering 3,339 miles (somehow avoiding the local constabulary in the process).

Phase 1 Testing, limit handling, and the high-speed oval

Hyundai Motor Group California Proving Grounds, California City

Every September, this swath of the land north of Edwards Air Force Base in the high desert near Mojave is overrun by alien invaders. Its normal inhabitants of camo-painted Hyundai and Kia prototype vehicles, driven by serious-minded engineers, scurry for cover. One after another, rumbling transporters pull into the Hyundai Motor Group California Proving Ground parking lot, hiss to a stop, and expel the most interesting new cars this model year has to offer. Quickly, the cars scatter, some to the vehicle dynamics area for figure-eight testing, others to the straight stability road for acceleration and brake stops. Photographers commence shooting, their assistants battling to keep light boards steady in the persistent winds. Sunscreen-slathered videographers head out for panning shots. Cars take turns lapping the giant oval, bouncing over the rough-road special surfaces area, and snaking the winding road handling course. Keys are swapped,

KUMBAYA MOMENT The staff plays a track version of musical chairs.

ALIAS NAME OK, sometimes the handling course was driven at, um, racetrack speeds.

WAR ROOM Some of us spent a week working out of this cramped office in the desert.

Phase 2 Real-world road loops

Tehachapi, California, west of Edwards Air Force Base near the Mojave Desert

notes scribbled. Tacos are eaten and water chugged.

By the end, we narrow the field to 11 finalists. We then head for the nearby town of Tehachapi for our competition's second act, our real-word on-road final shakeout. The proving ground—our annual home away from home for a decade—returns to its normal rhythm. Until next year.

ROAD TO KNOWLEDGE The Hyundai Motor Group California Proving Ground is encircled by a giant three-lane, 6.4-mile oval track.

We took 11 cars forward this year to tackle the real-world road loop in Tehachapi, California. This 27.6-mile mix of highway, city, and tight canyon roads starts in Tehachapi before climbing a mountain pass. The route snakes back toward State Route 58 via a two-lane country road. Judges pay attention to road and wind noise, steering response, and ride quality. They also test audio, climate, and driver-assistance systems.

1. Tehachapi Boulevard
Low-speed stop-start driving tests transmission calibration, throttle and brake tip-in, low-speed ride, and visibility.

2. Tehachapi–Willow Springs Road
Broken pavement tests tire noise suppression and whether NVH is transmitted into the body structure.

3. Tehachapi–Willow Springs Road summit
A sustained climb tests torque and transmission response; a sustained descent tests cruise-control effectiveness.

4. Cameron Road
A canyon road with mid-corner elevation changes induces major transient loads, ideal for testing steering, chassis balance, and body control.

5. Rail Crossing 1
A sharp bump at 10 mph tests the suspension effectiveness.

6. Freeway
Patched and broken concrete induces tire noise and high-frequency vibrations. Smooth asphalt tests ride quality in a commuting situation. The freeway stretch also allows for testing of cruise control, passive and active safety systems, semi-autonomous driving, and passing power.

7. Rail Crossing 2
An angled crossing induces twisting loads for a good assessment of chassis rigidity.

In total, we evaluated the field for 7,180 miles, the equivalent of driving from L.A. to Istanbul, and jotted 65,000 words in our notebooks (312 miles/2,826 words per entrant). We drank enough coffee to bolster Starbucks' third-quarter profits. In the end, we debated the pros and cons of our Eventual Eleven for two (sometimes fractious, often humorous) hours.

All to discern the smallest digit of them all: one. To which we'll hand our Golden Calipers for 2017. A truth with which St. Augustine would probably concur.

Kim Reynolds

CAFFEINATED CRITICS And that was just the first of this guy's daily quad espressos.

STAND-UP GUYS A tall Aussie in back (top left); our design expert opines (top right); Frank Markus pontificates for the camera

Buick LaCrosse

We Like: The spacious back seat and trunk, highway manners, and 31 highway mpg. **We Don't Like:** The new eight-speed automatic.

There was a time when large three-box American sedans with trunks the size of 24-hour gyms were as ubiquitous as half-caf skinny macchiatos are today. That's history, yet Buick soldiers on with the 2017 LaCrosse.

The most powerful LaCrosse engine to date, a 310-hp V-6, accelerates the FWD Buick (available with AWD) with authority, front HiPer struts handily quelling the expected torque-steer effect. But the new transmission "shunts on occasion," MacKenzie said. Of the electronic shift knob, he observed that it's "counterintuitive to use at first, especially when trying to engage reverse," which is a questionable choice considering Buick's aged demographic.

"If you don't look close, the interior makes a great first impression with its chocolate-and-saddle palette and wood-grain trim," Theodore said. "Unfortunately, on closer inspection, the leather has dents in the surface, there are unfinished and misaligned sew lines, the faux wood grain is far from believable, and it has an undesirable smell."

Ride and handling drew mixed reviews from our judges, from MacKenzie's jarring, "Whatever happened to Buick's QuietTuning?" to Loh's kudos to the ride and handling team "for programing such invisible stability control; its intervention was seamless."

In the end, Theodore put a fine point on the demise of the Buick. "The LaCrosse is a big improvement over the prior model," he said. "However, this is just a competitive car in a dying segment. And at more than $40,000, it doesn't seem to be a good value, either." **CW**

SPECS 2017 Buick LaCrosse (Premium)

Base Price/As Tested	**$41,990**/$48,495
Power (SAE net)	**310 hp** @ 6,800 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**282 lb-ft** @ 5,200 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.1 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.6 sec** @ 97.9 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.84 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.8 sec** @ 0.66 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**21/31/25 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.6L DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,732 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE** 114.4 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 197.5 x 73.5 x 57.5 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 160/109 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.79 lb/mile

Danger and deliberation in the desert

Every Of The Year begins months in advance with brainstorming sessions to establish the list of cars and minivans deemed sufficiently new and improved to warrant an invitation. Our first draft included a daunting 67 variants of 44 new models. But the worrisome initial size of our list of competitors was quickly winnowed by a rapid attrition rate.

Just asking to be part of COTY isn't enough—you have to deserve to be here. If your car isn't brand new or massively changed since last year, it doesn't warrant inclusion. Some automakers self-selected their way out. The Mitsubishi rep actually laughed into the phone when we requested a Mirage G4, before declining yet another opportunity for the enthusiast press to savage the minimalist econobox. Similar motivation may have withheld Buick's globally old, locally new enough Cascada.

Endless production postponements scuttled the Alfa Romeo Giulia—to the shock and bewilderment of no one. There also were no-shows with no explanation, as well as concurrent large-scale press events for the Porsche 718, Toyota Prius Prime PHEV, Infiniti Q60, and Smart

Chevrolet Cruze

We Like: Its great styling and class-leading safety tech. **We Don't Like:** The cramped rear seat, poor ride on rough roads, and lack of power.

We don't do a Most Improved award, but if we did, the Chevrolet Cruze would have that one locked up.

A few months ago, we published a Big Test of the latest compact sedans, and the Cruze finished second to the Honda Civic. That same Civic was a finalist for last year's Car of the Year award. But as it was unable to best the Civic, the Cruze had no clear path to winning this year's COTY contest.

That's not to say the Cruze is a second-class car. To the contrary, the judges had a lot of nice things to say about it. "Quite a bit of mass came out," Markus said, "and quite a bit of gizmology went in."

The Cruze received high praise for its styling inside and out (save the odd slash on the fender at the base of the A-pillars). The gaggle of features for the price was also commended, and the cellphone-holding slot in the center console received several call-outs. We also lauded the class-leading optional safety technology.

But there were complaints. Behind the wheel, judges were disappointed with the poor ride quality on rough pavement and a lack of pep from the turbocharged four-cylinder. And although lane keeping assist is rare in this segment, the Cruze tends to ping-pong between the lane markers rather than staying centered.

Mushy front seats received a negative call-out, and the rear seat, despite being heated, was dinged for a lack of headroom. Some of the interior materials took criticism for their lack of tactile and visual quality.

It's a clear improvement over its predecessor, but the Cruze still isn't good enough. **SE**

SPECS 2016 Chevrolet Cruze Premier

Base Price/As Tested	**$23,995**/$29,035
Power (SAE net)	**153 hp** @ 5,600 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	**177 lb-ft** @ 2,000 rpm*
Accel, 0-60 mph	**8.7 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.6 sec** @ 82.7 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**115 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.84 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.4 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**30/40/34 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 1.4L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,041 lb (60/40%) **WHEELBASE** 106.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 183.7 x 70.6 x 57.4 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 112/84 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.57 lb/mile

*SAE certified

LONG SHADOWS Pressing pause in the 7,180-mile action for a beauty shot.

Fortwo that ate up the national allocation of press cars. (A plea to makers of genuinely wonderful 2018-model cars: Please keep at least one unit available during the second half of September.) And scheduled production for five more models had yet to start. After those casualties, we had narrowed our field to 25 contenders with 34 variants.

The festivities start in earnest with an intrepid Rat Patrol expeditionary

Chevrolet Volt

We Like: Its battery-only range and paddle braking. **We Don't Like:** The cramped accommodations and weak styling.

If it weren't for the Chevrolet Bolt, we would have paid more attention to the Volt. But when we couldn't give the redesigned Toyota Prius more attention for its vaunted gains in mpg, packaging, and handling prowess, we couldn't really laud the evolutionary advances to the Volt, either.

"The Volt's problem is that the Bolt essentially makes it obsolete in terms of being an efficient commuter or city car," MacKenzie noted. That said, most people commute less than 50 miles a day, and if a Volt owner has a home recharger, the updated Volt's battery range makes gasoline refills a rarity. Markus called this "a pretty decent value proposition."

We found the new paddle braking to be a cool feature. Rather than use the traditional friction brakes with your foot, your left hand can pull back on a steering wheel–mounted paddle (similar to a paddle shifter) to simultaneously slow the car and recharge the battery pack.

The Volt's interior packaging took some dings. The back seat is tight for two people because of the battery pack's encroachment. "Headroom is also quite compromised if you are tall," Loh said. "The top of your head nearly meets the glass, and the side of your head is pretty close to the side of the headliner."

Chevrolet's styling also became an issue to Theodore, who saw the Volt nearly indistinguishable from the routine Cruze sedan.

With a sticker price higher than that of the Bolt, the Volt seems to be the wrong car at the right time. We imagine Chevrolet dealers will sell these only if Bolt inventories sell out. **MR**

SPECS 2017 Chevrolet Volt (Premier)	
Base Price/As Tested	**$38,445**/$39,950
Power (SAE net)	**101 hp** (gas), **149 hp** (elec), **149** (comb)
Torque (SAE net)	**103 lb-ft** (gas), **398 lb-ft** (elec), **398 lb-ft** (comb)
Accel, 0-60 mph	**7.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.9 sec** @ 83.9 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**114 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.4 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**43/42/42 mpg***

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 1.5L Atkinson-cycle DOHC 16-valve I-4 + elec/cont. variable auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,531 lb (60/40%) **WHEELBASE** 106.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 180.4 x 71.2 x 56.4 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 78/80 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.46 lb/mile

*Charge sustaining (106 mpg-e combined, charge depleting)

force spending five days in the high desert producing some of those impressive numbers Reynolds outlined on the previous pages. What he didn't mention was the harrowing weather braved by this 16-strong team. Forty-mph winds and chilly temperatures had folks bundling up like Bedouin tribesmen. They faced conceivable death from above and below, thanks to periodic flybys and sonic booms from Air Force B-1B Lancer strategic bombers flying out of nearby Edwards AFB and the threat of attack by one of the desert's lethal rattlesnakes—sidewinders and Mojave greens. (Fun fact: The former can slither at up to 18 mph, and when the latter bites you, it may or may not inject venom, but if it does, that venom is 16 times more toxic than that of a diamondback.) Happily, the mission concluded with no air or reptile strikes, though photographer Eli Somerfleck had a very close brush with a coyote, and Walton and Reynolds witnessed a non-Disney circle-of-life moment when a bobcat crossed their path clutching a desert cottontail in its teeth.

BEDOUIN Videographer Cory Lutz gets the shot.

Fiat 124 Spider

We Like: Its style and personality differentiation. **We Don't Like:** The turbo lag and heavier nose; different doesn't mean better.

Our selfish love of little roadsters almost earned the Fiat 124 a finalist berth. Potential rationalizations included Loh's contention that the handling was less darty than the donor Mazda MX-5's (while remaining equally fun to drive) and MacKenzie's praise of the Fiat's ride quality (asterisked to note some higher-speed float).

Walton proclaimed the Fiat "an ideal driving-school car that rewards sticking to the tenets of performance driving while amplifying the consequences of diverging from them." Theodore and Evans said that although the turbo powertrain suffers some lag, which costs it about a half-second relative to the Miata's 0–60 dash, its midrange thrust would erase this deficit on the real-world loop.

Many preferred the 124's styling, including Priddle and Rechtin, who singled out the view over the longer, more substantial hood. But Lieberman called it "a wonderful car let down by a grotesque front end," adding a play on the automaker's acronym: "Face-lift It Again, Tony."

Then our inner grownups crashed the party. Reynolds observed the Spider understeered turning right on the figure eight but drifted in the left turn—perhaps a consequence of the heavier iron-block engine upsetting the Mazda's nearer-perfect weight balance? Also, the engine's non-linear torque characteristics and lower redline represent retrograde steps in the Engineering Excellence category, and its lower EPA ratings cost it Efficiency points.

As our judges found few attributes where the Fiat soundly trumped its Mazda twin, we couldn't justify advancing the Spider to the finals. **FM**

SPECS 2017 Fiat 124 Spider (Classica)

Base Price/As Tested	**$25,990**/$27,285
Power (SAE net)	**160 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**184 lb-ft** @ 3,200 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.6 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.0 sec** @ 92.4 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**115 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.84 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.8 sec** @ 0.66 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**26/35/30 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, RWD, 2-pass, 2-door convertible **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 1.4L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed manual
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 2,420 lb (54/46%) **WHEELBASE** 90.9 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 159.6 x 68.5 x 48.5 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 130/96 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.66 lb/mile

In addition to harsh elements and potential predation, our advance team foraged for food in an effective Yelp desert, where sidewalks roll up just as the setting sun ends our photo shoots. Frantic phone calls ensue, begging restaurants to keep their kitchens open until the wee hour of 9 p.m. This year the team discovered upstart Thai Hachapi, which served up a tom kha gai that surpassed Walton's lofty expectations while offering a full menu of Asian beers with which to douse a spicy firemouth. A lunchtime culinary discovery helped break the taco-monotony: Stoken Donuts & Deli, which makes a mean French dip in the former Mojave library. We pray for their business' survival until COTY 2018.

One vital link to the comforts of L.A. life—visual assets

SWEPT With its wings in at their 79-foot span, Lancer can do Mach 1.25.

Ford Focus RS

We like: The smile you get while hucking it. **We don't like:** Its spine-chipping ride quality, Drift mode, and its single dimension.

Thought experiment: Think about your favorite hamburger. Juicy, deluxe, piled high with all the fixings, with spicy mustard, blue cheese, grilled onions, you name it. Sounds good, right? Now imagine eating it for breakfast. Every day.

The clumsy but tasty metaphor we're trying to illustrate is that on a back road, the Ford Focus RS is one of the most capable asphalt-attack vehicles we've driven. If the road twists enough, only the Nissan GT-R or Porsche Turbo S could keep up. Trouble is, police-free back roads are scarce.

The RS didn't work at Hyundai's proving ground and wouldn't have on most of the Tehachapi loop. MacKenzie's opening salvo: "A crude, one-dimensional performance car lacking nuance and finesse. Buy a Camaro 1LE instead. It doesn't need a Drift mode."

Angus wasn't alone. See, the suspension is stiff. Like really weirdly, uniquely stiff. "The chassis sign-off guys earn dunce caps," Markus said. As a result of that stiffness, the RS struggled on Hyundai's winding track. From Loh: "It bounces around like a pogo stick." From Rechtin: "It feels like a bucking bronco." From Priddle: "You bounce straight up and down." You get the idea, especially at $36,775.

The good points? Great seats and interior layout. The sticky tires and trick Twinster AWD system provide for absolutely massive levels of grip. But Loh noted that "Drift mode is really more like Donut mode. It does not get the tail out in the traditional rear-drive sense." Which kinda ruins its raison d'être.

"Barrels of fun," Evans summed up, "but not a contender." **JL**

SPECS 2016 Ford Focus RS

Base Price/As Tested	**$36,775**/$42,245
Power (SAE net)	**350 hp** @ 6,000 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	**350 lb-ft** @ 3,200 rpm*
Accel, 0-60 mph	**4.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**13.3 sec** @ 103.3 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**104 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**1.02 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**24.0 sec** @ 0.81 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**19/25/22 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.3L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed manual
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,417 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE** 104.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 172.8 x 71.8 x 58.0 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 177/135 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.91 lb/mile

*Tested on 93-octane fuel

honcho Brian Vance's daily brewing of exotic high-end coffees.

By 5 p.m. Friday, the test team was in place, awaiting the arrival of two judges and one RSVPed contestant—the Lincoln MKZ. The judges arrived an hour later; the Lincoln—which had been on sale for months—never showed. Lincoln's absurd excuse was a mix-up of the dates. (We've used the same week forever, and it was prominently printed in all our communications.) We concluded Lincoln's confidence in that sedan's class competitiveness was on par with that of Mitsubishi's in the Mirage G4.

Back when contemplating a field of 60-plus cars, we bumped the Saturday morning walk-arounds to Friday evening. This edification ritual allows the editors who attended the various contestant cars' launch events to share those cars' technical, marketing, and performance

Honda Accord

We Like: The hybrid's regenerative brake feel and buttoned-down ride. **We Don't Like:** The chromey brace-face and uninspiring drive.

Hybrid

"Flawless." "Utterly joyless." "Truly impressive for a big sedan." "The most disappointing car I've experienced in quite some time."

Could there be a more polarizing car at this year's COTY than the humble Honda Accord? An all-new hybrid version for 2017 and tweaks to the styling and feature set in 2016 were enough to qualify the venerable family sedan to our competition—where it was immediately met with howls over its looks.

"This one is a lumpen mess visually," MacKenzie said. "That great chrome girder across the front of the car is horrible."

Lieberman agreed. "There is absolutely no excuse here for the design," he said. "It moves the entire brand backward."

Others looked beyond the sheetmetal and found some lovely bones. "It absorbs bumps without reservations," Rechtin, who also praised the packaging, said. "It's just a really nice commodity car that makes you ask no questions."

Reynolds was among the Accord's fans. "I rather liked it better than most," he said. "It's a bit motorboaty while accelerating, but it has crisp brakes, accurate placement, and not too much understeer." Markus also scored the Accord high against our efficiency, safety, and engineering excellence criteria, noting the great engine notes of both powertrains and the "truly impressive" EPA numbers for the hybrid.

So there you have it. The 2017 Honda Accord is either "nothing special; the Honda magic is gone" or "a relatively crisp-handling everyman's sedan that's made well." Although competent, it's not our Car of the Year. **EL**

V6 Touring

SPECS 2017 Honda Accord V6 Touring		2017 Honda Accord Hybrid Touring
Base Price/As Tested	**$35,665**/$35,665	**$36,790**/$36,790
Power (SAE net)	**278 hp** @ 6,200 rpm	**143 hp** (gas), **181 hp** (elec), **212 hp** (comb)
Torque (SAE net)	**252 lb-ft** @ 4,900 rpm	**129 lb-ft** (gas), **232 lb-ft** (elec)
Accel, 0–60 mph	**5.7 sec**	**6.9 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.2 sec** @ 98.6 mph	**15.5 sec** @ 88.8 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**116 ft**	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.85 g** (avg)	**0.81 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.6 sec** @ 0.67 g (avg)	**28.0 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**21/33/25 mpg**	**49/47/48 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION V6** 3.5L SOHC 24-valve V-6/6-speed automatic **HYBRID** 2.0L DOHC 16-valve I-4 + elec/cont. variable auto **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) V6** 3,599 lb (62/38%) **HYBRID** 3,552 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE** 109.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT V6** 192.5 x 72.8 x 57.7 in **HYBRID** 194.1 72.8 x 57.5 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY V6** 160/102 kW-hrs/100 miles **HYBRID** 69/72 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB V6** 0.77 lb/mile **HYBRID** 0.40 lb/mile

highlights with the other judges. Models that sparked lengthy discussions included the innovation-packed Chrysler Pacifica minivan, the surprisingly elegant and luxurious Volvo S90, the aluminum-intensive Jaguar XE, and the electric Chevy Bolt, whose official 238-mile EPA range was announced just three days before. Eyebrows were raised at the price tags of the Cadillac CT6s. Then the slings and arrows started flying at the Prius' styling. "Looks like an animal in the wild that isn't venomous but really wants to appear venomous."

Dinner conversation that night and throughout the week often centered around the existential threat posed to "our world" by fully autonomous driving. When all cars drive themselves at the speed limit, will the market for

T&K PIZZA The restaurant next door hosted plenty of COTY chitchat.

Hyundai Elantra

We Like: The looks, the gearbox, the suspension, and the value. **We Don't Like:** That it's not as good as the Honda Civic.

ECO

What's cooking, good looking? All sorts of stuff, if you must know, the biggest being how spiffy this Hyundai looks. "It looks like Hyundai has passed through the wacky design stage and is now starting to present more mature-looking vehicles, both inside and out," MacKenzie said. Markus countered: "Although I'm persuaded that the new Fluidic 2.0 is a notable advancement generally, I think it works better on longer forms. This C-segment sizing isn't the best fit."

Yeah, but who's buying cars in this segment for their looks? You snatch 'em up for their value. Against that particular criterion, the Elantra, specifically the Eco model, was strong. "Eco is very high on value," Loh said. "This car has everything you need in an attractive, solid package: heated seats, cruise control, color display, and smartphone connectivity."

The dual-clutch transmission and good-for-its-segment ride quality also had the judges' attention. "This is the best 'sporty' transmission among standard compact sedans," Rechtin said. Added Theodore: "The Elantra is most improved on the special surface roads. It seems to have more suspension travel than the Cruze or Forte, and large vertical inputs didn't crash through the suspension and body structure."

MacKenzie, taking a swing at the king, said the powertrain refinement, ride and handling, and control feel "highlight how cheap and nasty Toyota's Corolla has now become."

Why not a finalist or Car of the Year? "It's a perfectly good car," Evans said, "but it's hard to justify as COTY because it already lost a Big Test to the Civic." **JL**

Limited
REAL MPG 27/41/32

SPECS 2017 Hyundai Elantra Eco		2017 Hyundai Elantra Limited
Base Price/As Tested	**$21,485**/$21,610	**$23,185**/$27,710
Power (SAE net)	**128 hp** @ 5,500 rpm	**147 hp** @ 6,200 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**156 lb-ft** @ 1,400 rpm	**132 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**8.0 sec**	**8.7 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.2 sec** @ 86.9 mph	**16.6 sec** @ 84.7 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**130 ft**	**125 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.82 g** (avg)	**0.82 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.4 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)	**27.5 sec** @ 0.61 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**32/40/35 mpg**	**28/37/32 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION ECO** 1.4L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/7-speed twin-clutch auto. **LIMITED** 2.0L Atkinson cycle DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) ECO** 2,855 lb (62/38%) **LIMITED** 2,959 lb (61/39%) **WHEELBASE** 106.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 179.9 x 70.9 x 56.5 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY ECO** 105/84 kW-hrs/100 miles **LIMITED** 120/91 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB ECO** 0.55 lb/mile **LIMITED** 0.62 lb/mile

performance cars shrink to the size of today's thoroughbred horse population? What will be left for us "experts" to critique? Might design be the primary differentiator between market offerings in order to allow buyers to express themselves? And how many "buyers" will there be if car-sharing continues on trend? These topics remained front of mind all week as we assessed driver assistance systems spanning those that merely help prevent lane departure, and therefore ping-pong between lane markers (Chevy Cruze, Chrysler Pacifica, Cadillac CT6, and others), those that attempt to keep the car centered in a lane (Kia Forte, Genesis G90, Mercedes E300), and the full-on Tesla Autopilot, which at testing time still permitted long-distance hands-free cruising.

SIRI Ed Loh dictates to a skeptical iPhone.

On Saturday morning, the team began evaluating this year's field at the Hyundai Motor Group's proving ground. There's no set driving order—just 34 cars parked with a window down and the keys inside. Most of us organize little comparison tests among direct competitors, such as

Jaguar XF

We Like: The simple, elegant design and Jag's first U.S. diesel engine. **We Don't Like:** The erratic interior quality and the rotary shift knob.

35T

Jaguar is on a roll this year—enough that the XE was a COTY finalist. The larger midsize XF shares many of the same attributes, but a few shortcomings held it back from making the final cut.

Gale described the styling as having a simple elegance and brilliant character lines. Markus said it has an "aggressive, poised-to-pounce stance and minimalist line work and trim details," and MacKenzie called it a "master class in elegant restraint."

Most agreed with Lieberman that it offered a composed, firm, and elegant ride with excellent steering. Evans called it "the most fun large sedan here," and Walton said the XF "has the poise and composure befitting a Jaguar."

The second-generation XF is the first Jaguar in the U.S. to offer a diesel engine, part of the new Ingenium engine family. The 20d was a favorite, although some expected better initial torque from the diesel. We also tested the 35t R Sport and S AWD, which have supercharged six-cylinder gasoline engines. That meant more horsepower but also more weight over the front axle. We also had issues with power delivery at times.

The interior got mixed reviews, especially the slow-to-respond pop-up rotary gearshift knob and the automatic vent covers, which some thought looked cheap. MacKenzie said the XF felt more upscale than the XE. It should be, as its starting price is $15,000 higher.

With the XF, Jaguar delivered a less practical yet fun bad-boy entrant to the class. But of the two Jaguars in the field, the XE delivered better in the value and fun-to-drive equations. **AP**

20d
REAL MPG 25/43/31

SPECS	2017 Jaguar XF 20d AWD R-Sport	2017 Jaguar XF 35t AWD (R-Sport)	2017 Jaguar XF S AWD
Base Price/As Tested	**$62,295**/$71,645	**$64,645**/$71,485	**$66,695**/$77,035
Power (SAE net)	**180 hp** @ 4,000 rpm	**340 hp** @ 6,500 rpm	**380 hp** @ 6,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**318 lb-ft** @ 1,750 rpm	**332 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm	**332 lb-ft @ 4,500 rpm**
Accel, 0-60 mph	**9.5 sec**	**4.9 sec**	**5.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**17.1 sec** @ 81.1 mph	**13.3 sec** @ 104.2 mph	**13.5 sec** @ 103.1 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**123 ft**	**122 ft**	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.82 g** (avg)	**0.81 g** (avg)	**0.85 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.8 sec** @ 0.60 g (avg)	**26.8 sec** @ 0.68 g (avg)	**25.5 sec** @ 0.73 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**30/40/34 mpg**	**20/28/23 mpg**	**20/28/23 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** **20d** 2.0L turbodiesel DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic **35t, S** 3.0L supercharged DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist)** **20d** 4,134 lb (51/49%) **35t** 4,226 lb (51/49%) **S** 4,271 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 116.5 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 195.0 x 74.0 x 57.4 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** **20d** 126/94 kW-hrs/100 miles **35t** 169/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **S** 169/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** **20d** 0.66 lb/mile **35t** 0.85 lb/mile **S** 0.85 lb/mile

Cruze/Elantra/Forte, XE/A4/C-Class, LaCrosse/Cadenza, etc. In each case, we compare the cars not only with each other but also against our knowledge of the established class leaders and actual comparison-test winners.

Throughout the course of our evaluations, we compare features and sample driving modes. Among head-up displays, for example, the huge, colorful Genesis HUD impressed us most, the XE's laser-based unit seemed a bit chintzier than the norm, and the lower-resolution Buick LaCrosse's drew snorts for offering a tachometer display. (Do they sell it with a stick in China?) Meanwhile, the Smart driving mode in the Kia Cadenza and Genesis G90 is supposed to detect your driving mood and adapt the steering, throttle, transmission, stability control, and (if equipped) all-wheel drive and adaptive damping to suit conditions.

Kia Cadenza

We Like: Its limo-large rear seat and upscale cockpit. **We Don't Like:** The geriatric ploughman dynamics exacerbated by stability nannies.

We drove this car back to back with its direct competitor, the Buick LaCrosse, and most of us preferred the Kia. Loh found the diamond-quilted leather interior "much more premium than the LaCrosse's." Reynolds gushed, "It's solid and refined, well-engineered. It really puts the Buick on a transporter back to Michigan (or wherever)." MacKenzie found it "smoother and more refined," adding that its "engine is more responsive and its transmission shifts quicker than the snoozy Buick's. When better Buicks are built, Kia will build them." If that was its intended function, Kia nailed it.

But is Buick the best target? Loh said that Kia should have tried to "out-Avalon Toyota." It fails in that mission, lacking the (2013 COTY finalist) Avalon's crisp driving dynamics. Instead, the Kia behaves more "like an old, large American luxury sedan, not like a quiet, smooth, yet surprisingly quick modern Avalon."

The purpose of the Smart driving mode baffled us. It didn't cinch up its suspenders when attacking our winding track, (prompting Rechtin to quip, "Dynamically, this thing plows like an F-350 with a snow blade"), nor did it add plushness when traversing the special surfaces bumps, disappointing Evans when it failed to deliver "the magic carpet ride I had predicted."

In other criteria, design guru Gale found some of the bodylines to be working against each other, alternately slimming and adding visual bulk to the form. And despite upgrading from six gear ratios to eight, fuel efficiency still trails in its segment.

Hence, no calipers. **FM**

SPECS 2017 Kia Cadenza SXL	
Base Price/As Tested	**$45,000**/$45,000 (mfr est)
Power (SAE net)	**290 hp** @ 6,400 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**253 lb-ft** @ 5,200 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.8 sec** @ 95.8 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**120 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.79 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.6 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**20/28/23 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.3L DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,794 lb (59/41%) **WHEELBASE** 112.4 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 195.7 x 73.6 x 57.9 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 169/120 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.85 lb/mile

But as we hooned these cars around the winding track, none of them buttoned things down to the extent that Sport mode did. We were also mystified by the purpose of Sport modes in the Accord Hybrid and Buick LaCrosse, neither of which seemed to sportify performance or handling.

As more editors took turns in the CT6s on the winding track, the comments started piling up about the aggressive seat belt hugs those cars bestowed during hard cornering or braking. So obnoxious were these forceful embraces that some were tempted to unbuckle. (Note: Don't do that.) Loh discovered that switching stability control completely off disables this devil nanny. (Note: Don't do that either.) The G90s bestowed seat belt squeezes of their own, but less aggressively and far less frequently. The S90 only clinched if all four wheels reached the top of their suspension travel—and then it was a grip worthy of a tap out.

Saturday ended with a regimented group photo of all contestant vehicles, complete with F-16 flyby, a sumptuous Red House BBQ dinner, and—back at the hotel—cigars and bourbon on the patio.

STYLIN' The CT6 and Pacifica both impressed Gale.

Kia Forte

We Like: Its refreshing updated exterior and good value. **We Don't Like:** The drab interior, lackluster acceleration, and overly firm ride.

In terms of acceleration and fuel economy, the 2017 Kia Forte lags behind not only the segment leaders but also its Hyundai Elantra cousin.

Replacing the previous 1.8-liter engine with the EX's 164-hp 2.0-liter I-4 and six-speed automatic helps the Forte run to 60 mph in 8.4 seconds while earning up to 33 mpg on the highway, a measured improvement. Unfortunately, the 2017 Hyundai Elantra Eco's 128-hp 1.4-liter turbo I-4 is paired to one of the segment's best transmissions, a seven-speed dual-clutch auto that sprints an 8.0-second 0–60 time and gets up to 40 miles on a gallon of gasoline. "The Kia boys must be getting a bit tired of their big brother," Theodore said. "They are always served second when a new platform [or driveline] comes out."

Small-car safety is important. And the 2016 Forte only received a Marginal score for small-overlap crash test—thus missing a coveted top rating. Kia hopes the redesigned 2017 edition will ace the IIHS tests by improving its crash results and garnering Top Safety Pick+ points for crash avoidance and mitigation with forward collision warning and autonomous emergency braking, lane departure warning, blind-spot detection, and rear cross-traffic alerts.

Other highlights of the EX model's Premium Plus package include curve-following HID headlights, ventilated front seats, voice-command navigation with real-time traffic, and a 7.0-inch color touchscreen.

The Forte is a solid, well-behaved, value-priced commodity car, but it's nothing special. Playing catch-up doesn't get you into the finalist circle. **CW**

SPECS 2017 Kia Forte EX	
Base Price/As Tested	**$22,050**/$26,540
Power (SAE net)	**164 hp** @ 6,200 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**151 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**8.4 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.5 sec** @ 85.8 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**127 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.81 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.5 sec** @ 0.61 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**25/33/28 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L DOHC 16-valve I-4/6-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 2,988 lb (62/38%) **WHEELBASE** 106.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 179.5 x 70.1 x 56.3 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 135/102 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.69 lb/mile

The straw poll of likely finalists at this point: XE, E-Class, G90, Pacifica, S90, Bolt, and Fiat Spider. That would change, dramatically.

A highlight of each COTY week is Tom Gale's design discussion, which happened early Sunday morning with select cars parked so as to catch the low-angle morning light just so. The legendary Chrysler stylist focuses on package and proportion (stance and wheel-to-body relationship, with emphasis on the wheel plane to glass plane), and on design and character (gesture, aggressiveness, line graphics, purity, and surface continuity). He started with two outliers—the 911 and the Pacifica, praising the former's lack of extraneous surfaces and sweet side-window graphic tracing back to the 356. He attributed the minivan's design success to moving the tire plane outside of the main body plane, as well as to

Mercedes-Benz C300 Coupe 4Matic

We Like: The strong, confident handling and luxury interior. **We Don't Like:** Its exterior styling and rough ride on uneven surfaces.

We had high hopes for this car, and deservedly so. It's a Mercedes coupe, so we wanted it all. But the Merc didn't deliver.

We did experience a car that was comfortable and controlled on the velvet-smooth proving ground track. The 2.0-liter turbocharged I-4 delivers six-cylinder levels of performance, and Lieberman said the "good brakes and nice handling are confidence-inspiring." But it all fell apart on uneven surfaces where judges had to baby the car over rough patches and worried about breaking the Benz. "It just beats you up," said Rechtin, who feared he would blow out a tire.

We appreciate that the C300 is infused with some E-Class tech, and we like the interior features. Our test vehicle had rich two-tone leather with soft-touch surfaces and delicate stitching, dark wood-grain finish, and a leather-wrapped steering wheel. The metal finishes are excellent. But the C300 was downright torturous in its packaging, even considering coupes aren't known for roomy back seats.

Judges took issue with the exterior styling. Loh called it "bar-of-soap boring" and criticized a design team "obsessed with sanding and polishing away any character." Gale called the patchwork roof graphic "disturbing." MacKenzie added: "A coupe should look better than its sedan counterpart, but in the case of the C-Class coupe, that isn't so. Viewed from the rear, this is an awkward-looking car."

Although the Mercedes-Benz C-Class sedan may have edged ahead of its BMW 3 Series rival, its coupe brother makes a less compelling case compared with the better-looking and more dynamic BMW 4 Series. **AP**

SPECS 2017 Mercedes-Benz C300 Coupe 4Matic

Base Price/As Tested	**$45,575**/$57,705
Power (SAE net)	**241 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**273 lb-ft** @ 1,300 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.2 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.6 sec** @ 93.3 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**109 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.91 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**25.9 sec** @ 0.71 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**23/29/25 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 4-pass, 2-door coupe **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/7-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,783 lb (55/45%) **WHEELBASE** 111.8 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 184.5 x 71.3 x 55.3 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 147/116 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.76 lb/mile

superb aerodynamics that let the roof roll off the sides of the car and to graphic work like lining up the door handles on the lower A-line.

Things got geekier from there. A long line of sedans was then led by the exceptionally spare Tesla Model S and the long dash-to-axle Jag XF and Caddy CT6, both of which use surfacing to accentuate their excellent proportions. He praised the distinctive Scandinavian nose and clean surfacing for adding gravitas to the Volvo, but he wished the rear-end design somehow better echoed the front. The Cadenza's body side A-line is positioned so as to reduce the visual height and heft of the body, but the headlamp graphics fight to replace both height and heft. Gale blamed the choice of matte paint on the E300 for removing all the romance of the surface.

Following Gale's analysis of the Accord, former Ford, Chrysler, and AMC product development guru Chris Theodore taught us a new word: polycoria—multiple eye pupils. And nearing the end of the discussion, Gale noted that in order to cope with the Clubman's enormous new size, Mini designers were forced to exaggerate wheel arch and headlamp graphics to

GOGGLE EYES Mini's headlamps were likened to Elmer Fudd's eyes.

Mercedes-Benz E300

We Like: The class-leading tech and affordable S-Class interior. **We Don't Like:** The uninspired styling and inconsistent driving behavior.

It's the German-car cliché: Design it once, sell it in three sizes. It's something we thought the Germans had gotten away from. But it seems to be creeping back. So although this new E-Class is a perfectly good car, it's nothing we haven't seen before.

Familiarity has its pluses and minuses. Judges lauded its baby S-Class technology suite, although the touch-sensitive steering wheel controls and layered infotainment menus met with mixed reviews, as did the lane keeping steering assist. All the gizmos quickly packed more than 17 grand onto the price tag, and there are plenty more options we could have specced.

For what should be a statement car, the E300's anonymous styling drew our ire. "They'll sell a ton as taxis in Europe," MacKenzie said. But that might be tricky given that the rear-seat legroom is more C-Class than S-Class.

The Merc also displayed inconsistent driving behavior. For some, the nine-speed automatic worked beautifully with the spunky turbocharged four-cylinder. For others, the gearbox was out of step, behind the play, and hard-shifting.

Handling impressions were likewise mixed, with some praise for its sporty demeanor and rear-drive character but also some derisive comments for the inadequate body control in long sweepers and a tendency to understeer when driven aggressively on winding roads.

In all, the E300 was not convincingly at the top of its class—either as a sport sedan or a luxury sedan. It has all the right ingredients to be either but couldn't seem to do both at the same time. **SE**

SPECS 2017 Mercedes-Benz E300 (Sport)	
Base Price/As Tested	**$53,075**/$70,525
Power (SAE net)	**241 hp** @ 5,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**273 lb-ft** @ 1,300 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.9 sec** @ 92.4 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**106 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.90 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**25.8 sec** @ 0.70 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**22/30/25 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/9-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,891 lb (53/47%) **WHEELBASE** 115.7 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 193.8 x 72.9 x 57.8 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 153/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.78 lb/mile

LUNCHTIME A culinary highlight of our weekend test days was taco-truck lunch.

maintain scale. Of the Prius, our design expert merely muttered, "There's just way too much happening here."

After several more hours of evaluation and a taco-truck lunch, we knuckled down to the task of culling the contenders. Cars with no staunch advocates were quickly eliminated, and that list included the Minis, Accords, Fiata, LaCrosse, Cadenza, and all the C-segment compacts. The Focus RS had admirers, but we couldn't see crowning such a one-note variant—and because Ford inexplicably neglected to send the base car we requested, we couldn't reward the Focus lineup. Limited variant availability hampered the C300's chances, too, as the hardtop turbo-four fell short in many places a convertible V-6 may have shined. After considerable discussion on the E300, the consensus was that a luxury version might have fared better against

Mini Clubman

We Like: The additional space, lightweight feel, and crisp turn-in. **We Don't Like:** The absent sense of quirky style and driving fun.

Cooper S

The Clubman is to Mini what supersizing is to McDonald's. But is more better?

The Clubman brings additional usable space and a quieter big-boy car feel—but at great cost. It's a girthy offering that is more than a foot longer and 4.6 inches wider than the last generation. And it's hardly recognizable from the base Mini hatchback.

"It looks like a big and bloated caricature of a Mini," MacKenzie said. "Same with the interior: Once an artful homage to Mini minimalism, it's now cluttered with oddly placed stuff."

Gale piled on: "Heavy-handed surfacing, wheel and wheel-opening proportions, and overdone graphics and lamp details all contribute to negate any advancement in design." Added Theodore: "Gone is the lightness, fun, and personality of the iconic original. My hero, Sir Alec Issigonis, must be rolling over in his grave. Shame! Shame! Shame!"

With the supersizing, the Mini essence was lost. "For a car that promises so much fun (including a proclamation of 'Let's Motor Hard!' in Sport mode), it underdelivers big time," Reynolds said. "On our figure eight, it does turn in crisply, but it basically understeers."

Priddle noted that the Mini's size and weight "contribute to the sensation it takes a long time to get to full speed."

Although a few judges preferred the lighter Cooper and its peppy three-cylinder over the heavier Cooper S, an AC system failure in the triple-digit temperatures damned the base model.

The Clubman is a bigger—but not better—Mini. And it's certainly not Car of the Year. **EL**

Cooper S

SPECS 2016 Mini Cooper Clubman		2016 Mini Cooper S Clubman
Base Price/As Tested	**$24,950**/$26,500	**$28,500**/$40,800
Power (SAE net)	**134 hp** @ 4,400 rpm	**189 hp** @ 5,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**162 lb-ft** @ 1,250 rpm	**207 lb-ft** @ 1,250 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**8.3 sec**	**7.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.5 sec** @ 83.8 mph	**15.5 sec** @ 90.4 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**113 ft**	**123 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.85 g** (avg)	**0.85 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.1 sec** @ 0.63 g (avg)	**27.0 sec** @ 0.65 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**25/34/28 mpg**	**23/33/27 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door wagon **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION COOPER** 1.5L turbo DOHC 12-valve I-3/6-speed manual **COOPER S** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) COOPER** 3,092 lb (58/42%) **COOPER S** 3,346 lb (60/40%) **WHEELBASE** 105.1 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 168.3 x 70.9 x 56.7 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY COOPER** 135/99 kW-hrs/100 miles **COOPER S** 147/102 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB COOPER** 0.68 lb/mile **COOPER S** 0.73 lb/mile

our design criteria than this dour, matte gray sport version did, especially against its Volvo and Cadillac rivals.

(A recap for you car-company PR people: Lose the matte paint, give us lighter-contrasting interiors, and send multiple variants, including the one that best represents the essence of the car. Oh, and don't go nuts on big wheels wrapped in rubber bands. Send us the versions consumers actually buy.)

ENGINEER EMERITUS Chris Theodore checks out the new Chrysler Pacifica.

Next up, we shifted gears and considered the cars that had strong support among the judges. The Bolt, 911, Pacifica, G90, and S90 were admitted to the finals with minimal fuss. Both Jaguars were popular, but between them the XE—having won a *Head 2 Head* against the BMW 3 Series—was deemed stronger in its class than was the XF. Caddy's CT6 had the jury split, but considering it had such strong design

Toyota Prius Two Eco

We Like: Its extraordinary mileage, greatly improved handling, and silky drivetrain. **We Don't Like:** The inexplicably strange styling.

Ever watch two dudes sit down to arm wrestle? You study their flexing biceps. Hmm, they look evenly matched. Their palms clasp, eyes lock, and arms tense, and then—BAM!—the back of one hand slams against the table. Over. Despite appearances, it isn't even close.

And that's symbolically what happened when we debated the fourth-generation Prius. Its legitimacy as a candidate was given an immediate pass. It crushes its rivals in sales, and it has a COTY pedigree—a predecessor had grabbed the calipers back in 2004.

Reynolds posited that "this car is a stunning technological advance, a road map to how future cars could actually achieve the government's target of 54 mpg by 2025."

Its revamped drivetrain delivers the best mileage ever achieved by an internal combustion automobile, with this Two Eco version hitting 58/53 mpg city/highway. Such advancement must put it in contention, right? No other hybrid comes close to this level of fuel-sipping excellence. So what if gas is cheap? This thing is amazing.

Then the wrestling started. "The exterior design is difficult to comprehend or describe," styling guru Tom Gale countered. Amid nodding heads, the battle was joined in earnest.

Reynolds fought back: "But its new chassis has a lower center of gravity, and its new rear suspension noticeably improves its handling." Crickets.

Gale: "This sort of thing just shouldn't be condoned by advancing it as a finalist."

Bam—That's the sound of the back of a hand on the table. Design matters. **KR**

SPECS 2016 Toyota Prius Two Eco	
Base Price/As Tested	**$26,030**/$26,030
Power (SAE net)	**95 hp** (gas),**71 hp** (elec), **121 hp** (comb)
Torque (SAE net)	**105 lb-ft** (gas), **120 lb-ft** (elec)
Accel, 0-60 mph	**9.9 sec**
Quarter Mile	**17.4 sec** @ 78.0 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**118 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.79 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**28.9 sec** @ 0.55 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**58/53/56 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 1.8L Atkinson-cycle DOHC 16-valve I-4 + elec/cont variable auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,027 lb (61/39%) **WHEELBASE** 106.3 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 178.7 x 69.3 x 58.1 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 58/64 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.35 lb/mile

and engineering chops, we decided to err in favor of determining whether it might fare better in the real world. Most of the elements of why the Tesla won in 2012 are unchanged, but so much of what we're focusing on now—driver assistance systems—is new, so we decided to advance it.

And although we're high on technology ... what about the Volt and Prius? The Volt is arguably a huge upgrade in technology, but it's less so as a car, and as the second star to the other green-minded Chevy, it was cut. The Prius had a staunch defender in Reynolds, who believes styling alone killed the world's most efficient gas-powered car, but other editors called out its grinding understeer, nautical handling, lack of any on-demand regenerative braking like the Bolt/Volt steering wheel paddle, and the fact that it's soulless to drive. After 20 minutes, Gale quipped, "Geez, it took all six bullets to put that one down." At this point we had 10 cars including variants. With 11 judges, we decided to elevate the Audi A4—which had produced a hung jury.

2017 MOTOR TREND CAR OF THE YEAR®

The Finalists ...

Our nine finalists represent the U.S., Germany, Great Britain, Korea, and Sweden (with Japan surprisingly absent). Evaluating cars as distinct as a 180-mph sports car, a family-first minivan, and two wildly different electric cars is not an intuitive process, so we use our criteria to determine who gets to take home the top prize, our Golden Calipers.

DIVERSITY IS A VIRTUE They all have four wheels. That's where the similarities of our nine finalists end.

Audi A4

We Like: Its excellent chassis and virtual cockpit. **We Don't Like:** The regressive design, cost-saving interior, and lack of a soul.

A controversial finalist among the judges, the Audi A4 hit hard on some criteria and weakly on others, leading to intense debate regarding the merits of the car as a whole.

The A4 packs a brilliant chassis, which handled exceptionally well on the proving ground and our real-world loop. Judges also gave high marks in engineering excellence to the engine, transmission, and build quality. The spacious rear seat and cavernous trunk were complimented, as well.

More than anything, judges were floored by the optional virtual cockpit digital dashboard ($3,250). Yes, we've seen it in other Audis, but it's absolutely unmatched in its class and indeed at this price point.

In other categories, though, the A4 struggled. Most notably, the judges unanimously agreed the exterior styling is a step backward. "I get the impression Audi tries pretty hard not to advance its designs except extremely incrementally," Markus said. "I anticipate struggling to remember which generation is which in 10 or 20 years."

The interior, aside from the virtual cockpit instrument panel, also came under heavy fire. Judges were underwhelmed by both the quality of materials and the fit and finish, places Audi has historically overachieved. "It's as if they spent all their time and money on the virtual cockpit and didn't have anything left for the rest of the interior," Theodore said.

Although Audi nailed the engineering fundamentals, it failed to inspire with numerous touch points and was far too conservative design-wise. It's a great platform looking for more inspiring sheetmetal. **SE**

SPECS 2017 Audi A4 Quattro (Premium Plus)	
Base Price/As Tested	**$44,150**/$47,900
Power (SAE net)	**252 hp** @ 5,600 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**273 lb-ft** @ 1,600 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.3 sec**
Quarter Mile	**13.9 sec** @ 98.6 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**105 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.92 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**25.3 sec** @ 0.74 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**24/31/27 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/7-speed twin-clutch auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,623 lb (56/44%) **WHEELBASE** 111.0 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 186.1 x 72.5 x 56.2 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 140/109 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.73 lb/mile

The finalist round

We each spent 45 minutes driving each finalist on a highway-and-byway circuit near Tehachapi, which affords ample time to notice things we miss in the hurly-burly of the test-track days. Evans noted that the Audi was transmitting more bumps and jounce than the 911. Rechtin dinged the A4's leather seats as borderline rubbery, but he declared the

Cadillac CT6

We Like: Its swaggering on-road presence and the 2.0T powertrain and steering. **We Don't Like:** Its quality glitches and the 3.0TT's ride.

2.0T

It pained us how badly we wanted to like the Cadillac CT6. The muscular exterior looks swaggeringly upscale. "Good looking, masculine, chiseled, sinister," Loh said. "It's unabashedly gangster." But the interior doesn't follow through: the rickety feel as the power seats scroll fore and aft, the muscle required to move the shifter, the cheap-looking switches purloined from the GM parts bin.

The drive experience is a mixed bag, too. The RWD 2.0T is more pleasant than the AWD 3.0TT, which weighs 496 pounds more, feels nose-heavy, and has a worse ride. Although GM's 2.0-liter turbo I-4 isn't as impressive as the similar powerplant in the Mercedes E-Class, the 2.0T's powertrain is smoother than 3.0TT's V-6, which surges strangely at times. And the GM eight-speed automatic is especially clunky delivering one-two shifts on light throttle, and it feels nowhere near as refined as the Hyundai-built transmission in the Genesis G90.

A weird "not invented here" syndrome at Cadillac has led to some obtuse product planning decisions. It starts with the vehicle concept. "Size-wise the CT6 is a tweener," Theodore said. "It's not a true flagship, and it's not a 5 Series or E-Class competitor." That extends to the details, such as the infuriatingly complex process to switch between Tour and Sport modes. And both Cadillacs suffered disappointing quality glitches during testing; the 3.0TT signaled its AWD system required service, and the 2.0T's CUE system crashed altogether.

As Evans succinctly put it, "The body is writing checks the rest of the car can't cash." **AM**

3.0TT
REAL MPG 18/25/20

SPECS 2017 Cadillac CT6 2.0T (Luxury)		3.0TT AWD (Platinum)
Base Price/As Tested	**$59,390**/$69,010	**$88,490**/$91,580
Power (SAE net)	**265 hp** @ 5,500 rpm*	**404 hp** @ 5,700 rpm*
Torque (SAE net)	**295 lb-ft** @ 3,000 rpm*	**400 lb-ft** @ 2,500 rpm*
Accel, 0-60 mph	**6.4 sec**	**5.1 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.7 sec** @ 92.8 mph	**13.6 sec** @ 102.3 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**117 ft**	**115 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.82 g** (avg)	**0.83 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.7 sec** @ 0.66 g (avg)	**25.9 sec** @ 0.72 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**22/30/25 mpg**	**18/26/21 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT **LUXURY** Front-engine, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **PLATINUM** Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **LUXURY** 2.0L turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic **PLATINUM** 3.0L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) **LUXURY** 3,893 lb (51/49%) **PLATINUM** 4,389 lb (53/47%) **WHEELBASE** 122.4 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 204.0 x 74.0 x 57.9 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY **LUXURY** 153/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **PLATINUM** 187/130 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB **LUXURY** 0.78 lb/mile **PLATINUM** 0.93 lb/mile

*SAE certified

CT6's shiatsu massage seat "worthy of a favorite nail salon." Sadly, he predicted the same seat's lack of lateral support would help drivers develop "six-pack abs trying to keep centered in the seat."

The CT6's inside rearview mirror can present a wide-angle camera view or a normal reflected view. The former gave many editors a headache refocusing on the close-range image. (This feature also begged the question, "Why on earth is the reverse-camera image on the big central screen so much lower resolution than the rearview mirror?")

On the Genesis, Theodore praised how it "could slice comfortably through Cameron Road at 55 mph with less drama than the Cadillac CT6," and Reynolds declared the G90 "so boring I just couldn't stand it; it makes a Lexus seem like a Ferrari." Loh declared that he'd take the tranquil Tesla over many

BODY LANGUAGE Jonny holds court with Mark and Kim, who appear unconvinced.

Chrysler Pacifica

We Like: Its styling inside and out, functionality, and independent rear suspension. **We Don't Like:** Waiting for the hybrid.

Touring

The 2017 Chrysler Pacifica minivan surprised and delighted. Theodore called it the best Chrysler minivan since the 1996 model was named *Motor Trend* Car of the Year. If Chrysler had a hybrid version available to test this year, it might have been enough to add another set of Golden Calipers.

Judges were impressed with the drive performance, which had surprisingly little body roll, an improved nine-speed transmission, and an adroitness that belies the minivan class. "If you didn't know you were in a minivan and opened your eyes for the first time," Theodore said, "you'd swear you were in a luxury SUV."

We like the modern look, hidden sliding door tracks, and tasteful interior with touches such as van silhouettes imprinted into the console rubber mat. Loh liked the satin nickel finish and called the steering wheel "a joy to hold."

As Markus said, functionality is a minivan's "sole raison d'être," and the Pacifica gets top marks for the comfortable Stow 'n Go seats, which can fold flat or tilt forward with a child seat intact. A lighter body allowed Chrysler to add more equipment, including a built-in vacuum, the van's first independent rear suspension, and the upcoming hybrid two-motor e-CVT, which gets 80 mpg-e and could be a game changer. We like the option of normal or adaptive cruise control for when road crud fouls the radar lens.

The result: a lot of vehicle for the price. MacKenzie summarized our thoughts: "The Pacifica is class-leading and by far the best thing sold under the Chrysler nameplate at the moment." **AP**

Limited

SPECS 2017 Chrysler Pacifica Touring		Limited
Base Price/As Tested	**$31,490**/$33,475	**$43,490**/$48,280
Power (SAE net)	**287 hp** @ 6,400 rpm	**287 hp** @ 6,400 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**262 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm	**262 lb-ft** @ 4,000 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**6.7 sec**	**7.7 sec**
Quarter Mile	**15.1 sec** @ 92.4 mph	**15.9 sec** @ 89.6 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**131 ft**	**129 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.79 g** (avg)	**0.82 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.5 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)	**27.5 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**18/28/22 mpg**	**18/28/22 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT TOURING Front-engine, FWD, 8-pass, 4-door van **LIMITED** Front-engine, FWD, 7-pass, 4-door van
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION 3.6L DOHC 24-valve V-6/9-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) TOURING** 4,372 lb (56/44%) **LIMITED** 4,584 lb (56/44%)
WHEELBASE 121.6 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 203.8 x 79.6 x 69.9 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** 187/120 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB 0.90 lb/mile

other competitors because he felt "more calm and able to appreciate more of the world with so little noise coming through. It's like a mobile meditation room." Lieberman begged Elon Musk for a proper sunshade. (We know Elon eventually hears all plaintive bleatings made in his cars, so expect a running change on the assembly line.)

Roadside attractions during our Tehachapi drive loops included Theodore almost flattening a roadrunner, a truck losing a load of fencing next to Loh, and some random farmer stopping dead on a 55-mph highway between two closely spaced sharp curves. Exciting!

On Monday night, certified beer snob/judge Lieberman declared Vance's discovery of Honey Wagon Brewing, tucked away in a Tehachapi industrial park, this OTY season's most significant alimentary revelation, singling out the Hop 10 and Double IPA as their most auspicious offerings. Everyone then convened at Big Papa's Steakhouse &

Genesis G90

We Like: The great "base" V-6 and undeniable value. **We Don't Like:** Its conservative styling and lack of technical innovation.

3.3T HTRAC

Read these gushing reviews, and you'd think the Genesis G90 was a sure thing to win the whole shebang:

MacKenzie: "Noise levels are very low, and ride quality is right on the money for a luxury car."

Rechtin: "I got hit by a big crosswind while going 120 mph, and it just shrugged it off as a minor irritant. Oh, are those bumps? I thought someone was tickling me."

Priddle: "$70,000 for loaded luxury sedan with all-wheel drive and virtually everything standard, plus three years of no additional costs for service, including valet service appointments, XM satellite, updated nav, etc.—hard to beat."

Markus: "A very serene cabin in which to travel, beautifully finished. Everything looks upscale."

Loh: "When your snobby neighbor asks why you got this instead of a 5 Series or CT6, put 'em in the back seat with its duplicated stereo, HVAC, heated-seat controls in the armrest, straight out of Bentley/Maybach. Then floor it."

So where did the first new luxury brand in the U.S. since Tesla in 2004 go wrong? Priddle observed that Genesis should have "come out of the gate with a striking vehicle that commands attention and has people asking what that new vehicle is."

But it was more than the ho-hum styling. If Genesis wanted to make an entrance, it should have made a technological statement, as well. Noted Rechtin: "Every feature about the car screams 'table stakes.' There is nothing exceptional here."

Pitching value-for-money in the crowded luxury segment may not be enough. A real missed opportunity. **CW**

5.0

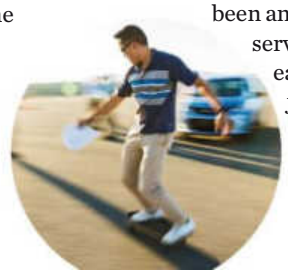
SPECS 2017 Genesis G90 3.3T HTRAC (AWD Premium)		5.0 (Ultimate)
Base Price/As Tested	**$71,550**/$71,550	**$70,650**/$70,650
Power (SAE net)	**365 hp** @ 6,000 rpm	**420 hp** @ 6,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**376 lb-ft** @ 1,300 rpm	**383 lb-ft** @ 5,000 rpm
Accel, 0–60 mph	**5.4 sec**	**5.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**13.9 sec** @ 100.7 mph	**13.5 sec** @ 104.5 mph
Braking, 60–0 mph	**117 ft**	**119 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)	**0.83 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.9 sec** @ 0.67 g (avg)	**26.7 sec** @ 0.68 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**17/24/20 mpg**	**16/24/19 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT AWD PREMIUM Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ULTIMATE** Front-engine, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan
ENGINE/TRANSMISSION AWD PREMIUM 3.3L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **ULTIMATE** 3.3L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) AWD PREMIUM** 4,693 lb (52/48%) **ULTIMATE** 4,802 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 124.4 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT 204.9 x 75.4 x 58.9 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY AWD PREMIUM** 198/140 kW-hrs/100 miles **PLATINUM** 211/140 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB AWD PREMIUM** 0.99 lb/mile **ULTIMATE** 1.03 lb/mile

Saloon, which will prepare beef precisely to Priddle's specification—blue rare.

After finishing the last of the loops Tuesday morning, deliberations got underway at noon sharpish and started with the last vehicle to make the finalist cut, the Audi. The brief discussion was about as restrained and soporific as the A4's design. Despite the Audi's near-scientific excellence, the consensus was that the A4 had gone retrograde.

Things heated up with the CT6, a car that seems bent on overcomplicating simple tasks. The real world had not been any kinder to the Cadillac, serving only to accentuate earlier tendencies toward jerky transmission shifts, harsh suspension inputs, and a CUE system that's



FEARLESS LEADER Ed Loh wheel-surfs the Hyundai proving ground.

LAST-IN, FIRST-OUT The snoozy-styled Audi won no hearts on the Tehachapi loop.

Jaguar XE

We Like: The handling and steering dynamics and its punchy gas engine. **We Don't Like:** The interior packaging and layout of controls.

20d AWD

If one wishes to forget the entry-luxury abomination that was the Jaguar X-Type, a rollicking drive in the new XE sedan is the quickest way to do so.

Boasting handling and steering dynamics superior to the German entrants, the XE might have redefined the "sport" in sport sedan. "The rear-drive 35t is a legitimate sport sedan," MacKenzie said. "It has a wonderfully playful chassis, delightful steering, and a punchy engine. Ride quality is also decent despite the low-profile tires." Walton described the XE as having "a modicum of British style and hooliganism."

We were less enchanted with the diesel variant, whose high-mpg, low-performance equation doesn't match the XE's ready-to-pounce exterior styling.

And it wouldn't be a Jaguar if there weren't some head-scratching moments. "Window switches are at the ergonomically wrong level," Theodore said. "The armrest is too low and beltline too high to find a comfortable place to rest your arm. There is minimal map-compartment storage. Trunk storage is smallest in class. The release handles for the back seat are cheaply mounted plastic that is easily broken." Not to mention our distaste for the recalcitrant rotary shifter and some oddly cheap-feeling interior bits.

At 6-foot-1, Rechtin found the back-seat packaging inaccessible for adults. Despite being shorter-legged, Loh agreed, calling the rear seat "cramped and claustrophobic."

That said, Theodore forgave the XE its sins: "This car has soul and passion that makes putting up with a few minor deficiencies worthwhile." **MR**

R-Sport
REAL MPG 23/20/25

SPECS 2017 Jaguar XE 20d AWD		XE 35t (R-Sport)
Base Price/As Tested	**$39,895**/$55,485	**$50,195**/$59,635
Power (SAE net)	**180 hp** @ 4,000 rpm	**340 hp** @ 6,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**317 lb-ft** @ 1,750 rpm	**332 lb-ft** @ 4,500 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**8.8 sec**	**4.5 sec**
Quarter Mile	**16.6 sec** @ 83.5 mph	**12.9 sec** @ 106.2 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**123 ft**	**104 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.83 g** (avg)	**0.94 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**27.2 sec** @ 0.62 g (avg)	**24.9 sec** @ 0.79 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**30/40/34 mpg**	**21/30/24 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT 20D Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **R-SPORT** Front-engine, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION 20D** 2.0L turbodiesel DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic **R-SPORT** 3.0L supercharged DOHC 24-valve V-6/8-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 20D** 3,950 lb (51/49%) **R-SPORT** 3,913 lb (51/49%) **WHEELBASE** 111.6 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 183.9 x 72.8 x 55.7 in **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 20D** 126/94 kW-hrs/100 miles **R-SPORT** 160/112 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB 20D** 0.66 lb/mile **R-SPORT** 0.80 lb/mile

APPROPRIATE SHARING Theodore and Walton make a point with Excel backup.

little improved by the addition of a haptic touchpad. By now the USB ports in the CT6 2.0-liter had crapped out, making it impossible to assess CarPlay or to charge our depleted iPhones. Poor quality is always a disqualifier.

Tesla's Model S transports occupants to the future no matter which route they take. It has inspired peculiar Supercharger tourism, where owners plan trips to new places based on where the charging stations are located. Over-the-air updates mean never being stuck with exactly the same car for too terribly long. It hits many other criteria, as well. But that new trout-pout "grille" is a controversial design enhancement, and the 60 model's value proposition is tougher to make with the Chevrolet Bolt in the picture.

To misquote Sara Lee, nobody doesn't like driving a Porsche 911—even engineers

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Porsche 911

We Like: Its superb engine, telepathic steering, confidence-inspiring chassis, and iconic styling. **We Don't Like:** Umm ...

Porsche keeps polishing its jewel. Just when you think the engineers in Weissach couldn't make one of the world's definitive sports cars any better, they roll out a 911 that does just that.

The 991.2's new 3.0-liter turbocharged engine, available with 370 hp (Carerra) or 420 hp (Carerra S), delivers a broad torque brand and impressive efficiency. Even on base wheels and tires, the chassis is staggeringly communicative and adjustable—easily the nicest and most user-friendly in 911 history. It's supercar performance at half (or one-third) the price.

Porsche's PDK dual-clutch automatic is a benchmark transmission in terms of its smooth, precise shifts. But the seven-speed stick shift on the base 911 Carerra we tested (the car had but seven options) delighted with a rifle-bolt action. The engineering excellence in this latest 911 range is deep and pervasive, and it offers genuine consumer benefit. Inside, there's a new infotainment interface that looks great and works well.

As for styling, Markus noted, "Redesigning a 911 is generally such a heavily constrained concept that I don't think they will ever earn a super-high mark in design advancement." But the 991.2, a mild refresh of the bigger, skillfully re-proportioned 991.1, is still a superbly executed interpretation of classic 911 themes—modern and beautiful.

The Porsche absolutely nails the performance of intention criterion. "When all cars but one are autonomous, please let this be it, the last human-driven car," Reynolds said, speaking for us all while describing the 911's visceral appeal. "For posterity's sake." **AM**

SPECS 2017 Porsche 911 Carrera	
Base Price/As Tested	**$90,450**/$97,010
Power (SAE net)	**370 hp** @ 6,500 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**331 lb-ft** @ 1,700 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**3.9 sec**
Quarter Mile	**12.3 sec** @ 113.9 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**98 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**1.03 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**23.5 sec** @ 0.86 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**20/29/23 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Rear-engine, RWD, 4-pass, 2-door coupe **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 3.0L twin-turbo DOHC 24-valve flat-6/7-speed manual
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 3,221 lb (38/62%) **WHEELBASE** 96.5 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 177.1 x 71.2 x 50.9 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 169/116 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.83 lb/mile

who view the ass-engine location as an anachronism and inherent liability. Its steering feel and dynamics can be appreciated whether slalom-pacing a sidewinder at 18 mph or dicing down any canyon road. It was also the car we identified early on as the vehicle of choice to transport any Mojave green bite victims to the ER. But its history of incremental improvement did not advance its 911-dom sufficiently to warrant the calipers.

DIVERSE FIELD Walton sizes up the finalists and fellow judges on the eve of the momentous vote to determine Car of the Year.

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Tesla Model S 60/75

We Like: The updated software, Autopilot on the freeway. **We Don't Like:** The 60-kW-hr battery range, Autopilot anywhere but the freeway.

The Problem: The 60-kilowatt-hour version of the Tesla Model S is one of our finalists for Car of the Year. However, its range is about 200 miles. Our finalist loop is 27.6 miles long, and we're doing eight loops on the first day. We realized that the judge on the last loop would never make it back to the Marriott. Solution: Call Tesla!

The Model S 60 is really a Model S 75 with a software governor restricting the amount of juice you can flow into the battery. If you buy a 60-kW-hr version and later decide that you want an extra 40 miles of range, you can pay Tesla $9,000 to uncork the battery with an over-the-air software update. Voilà. You have a Model S 75.

That's perhaps the biggest reason why the Model S was a finalist this year. As Markus said, "I'm awed by the upgradability. Go to sleep with a 60, wake up with a 75." Reynolds explained further: "The Model S' entrée to this year's COTY field was primarily via a whole new doorway to eligibility—its significantly updated software—since what was essentially the same car had won COTY in 2013."

Not like there's anything wrong with the original, as its "super-flat cornering and high levels of grip" won praise from Markus.

We also had ample opportunity to experiment with Tesla's Autopilot smart cruise control, which has been the topic of endless chatter. And although it's a boon on the freeway, it provided some worrisome moments while on back roads where lane markings weren't precise.

After four years on the market, the Tesla is still a technological and dynamic force to be seriously considered. **JL**

SPECS 2016 Tesla Model S 60

Base Price/As Tested	**$67,200**/$71,200
Power (SAE net)	**315 hp** @ 5,000 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**325 lb-ft** @ 0 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.0 sec**
Quarter Mile	**13.6 sec** @ 103.5 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**121 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.86 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.5 sec** @ 0.70 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**98/101/99 mpg-e**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Rear-motor, RWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **MOTOR/TRANSMISSION** AC induction electric/1-speed auto
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,434 lb (47/53%) **WHEELBASE** 116.5 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 196.0 x 77.3 x 56.5 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 34/33 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.00 lb/mile

INNOVATIVE The Pacifica is the world's best minivan.

We took a collective nap while discussing the Genesis G90's inability to inspire any sort of passion. An underlying theme in our discussion about the G90 suggested that if we could just peel off its monotonous bodywork and somehow slip on the CT6's, we'd have a competent, luxurious, well-mannered car with mega swagger.

Cars that would eventually earn podium votes included the sublime-looking, spectacular-handling Jaguar XE despite the many sacrifices it demands in terms of rear-seat packaging, quirky ergonomics, and a yesteryear infotainment interface.

Also winning plaudits was the Volvo S90, which connected with editors on an emotional level and scored high on most criteria, but it got torpedoed by those noisy Pirelli P Zero dubs and its awkward rear fascia and rear three-quarters design.

Volvo S90

We Like: The smooth ride, interior design, and price-value equation. **We Don't Like:** The road noise and handling deficiencies.

Volvo could have won back-to-back Of The Year titles following last year's SUV triumph for the XC90. And although this year's S90 is a stellar flagship sedan, Volvo's premier offering fell short in some crucial categories.

Gothenburg is finally creating cars on par with the German luxury players. As befitting a luxury car, the S90's ride is smooth and refined. "The suspension is soaking up more of this tilted-slab stuff," Markus said. "The car feels rock stable at 120 mph."

Volvo only equips its top-line model with four-cylinder engines—then turbocharges and supercharges the bejesus out of the induction. Small engines mean better packaging for passengers.

The Volvo also looks the part by avoiding the accepted German design motifs and creating some of its own. The front fascia looming in your rearview mirror is a thing of beauty. "The S90 has the confident stance and studied elegance of a classic rear-drive sedan," MacKenzie said. Walton described the interior as "a welcome relief from stodgy German, erratic American, and 'Why'd they do that?' British."

The S90 also wins the value equation by undercutting the Cadillac CT6 and Mercedes E300 by $5,000–$10,000.

But there were demerits that sank the S90's chances. Far too much tire and road noise intruded into the cabin. An emphasis on ride comfort sacrificed handling with a fair amount of pitch and roll. The C-pillar and rear three-quarter design seems incomplete. Braking felt mushy. So although a finalist, the S90 didn't have enough charm to take home the Golden Calipers. **MR**

SPECS 2017 Volvo S90 T6 AWD Inscription

Base Price/As Tested	**$57,245**/$66,105
Power (SAE net)	**316 hp** @ 5,700 rpm
Torque (SAE net)	**295 lb-ft** @ 2,200 rpm
Accel, 0-60 mph	**5.6 sec**
Quarter Mile	**14.1 sec** @ 98.9 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	**107 ft**
Lateral Acceleration	**0.88 g** (avg)
MT Figure Eight	**26.3 sec** @ 0.68 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	**22/31/25 mpg**

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door sedan **ENGINE/TRANSMISSION** 2.0L turbo- & supercharged DOHC 16-valve I-4/8-speed automatic
CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist) 4,148 lb (55/45%) **WHEELBASE** 115.8 in **LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT** 195.4 x 74.0 x 56.8 in
ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY 153/109 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB** 0.77 lb/mile

Timing is everything. This contest came down to an incredibly close race between two great vehicles: the world's first truly affordable long-range electric car—which, by the way, if it were powered by a gas engine would still be ranked as a COTY-worthy B-segment hatchback—and the world's most astutely designed, styled, tuned, and outfitted minivan. Both scored highly on nearly all criteria. Neither registered any serious "yeah, but" arguments, neither malfunctioned in any way, and both felt tight and well constructed. The key differentiator was that although the Chrysler Pacifica is an admirable advance in the minivan category, without its Hybrid model present, we couldn't assess its prospects for altering our future as much as the $30,000 238-mile-range, fully electric Chevrolet Bolt seems poised to.

Frank Markus

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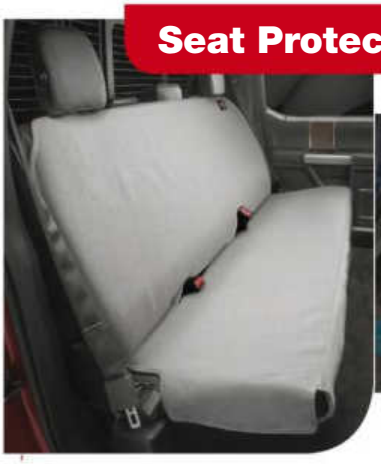

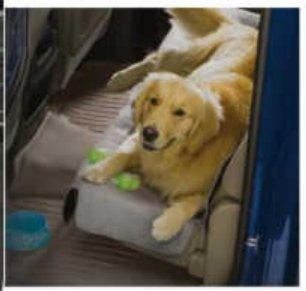

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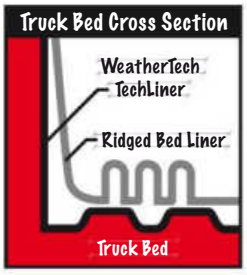

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2017
MOTORTREND
CAR OF THE YEAR®
CHEVROLET BOLT EV
BOLT EV

WINNER | **2017 CAR OF THE YEAR**

CHEVY CHANGES THE GAME. AGAIN.

Words Angus MacKenzie
Photographs Brian Brantley

THE GROUNDBREAKING CHEVROLET BOLT EV IS THE CAR OF TOMORROW. TODAY.

That sound? It's almost imperceptible, but it's there. The soft rustle of air over steel and glass, the muted hum of rubber on tarmac, the faint whirr of spinning metals. It's the sound of electrons at work, the sound of electrical energy being converted into motion, the sound of the automotive world shifting on its axis. It's the sound of the 2017 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year, the Chevrolet Bolt EV.

The Bolt EV is not GM's first pure electric car. The company has been experimenting with electric vehicles for decades, stuffing batteries into Corvairs in the mid-1960s and developing the fiendishly complex EV-1 in the 1990s. You can buy an all-electric version of the Spark from your friendly local Chevy dealer right now. But the Bolt EV is the first conceived from the get-go by GM to be a viable, affordable mass-market electric vehicle. And it's a game changer.

Two numbers—238 and 29,995—are why. The first is the number of miles the EPA has certified the Bolt EV will travel on a full charge. The second is the price, in dollars, of the Bolt EV, after allowing for a $7,500 federal tax rebate. By offering that range at that price, the Bolt EV has made just about every other electric vehicle on sale obsolete. "Simply put, it's twice the car for half the price of a BMW i3," guest judge Chris Theodore said. "A better car, better package, much better handling, with twice the range."

Even the folks at Tesla, the electric vehicle masters of the universe, have been put on notice: The Bolt EV sets a benchmark for value and performance they'll have to work overtime to match. "This is a direct challenge for Tesla to make the Model 3 anything near the Bolt EV for the same price," executive editor Mark Rechtin said. "Chevrolet has made affordable long-range electric transportation available to the masses. Elon Musk should be afraid. Very, very afraid."

Perhaps the most impressive thing about the Bolt EV is there are no caveats, no "for an electric car" qualifiers needed in any discussion. It is, simply, a world-class small car, and that's before you factor in the benefits inherent in the smoothness, silence, and instant-on torque provided by the electric motor. The ride is firm and sporty, but transmitted road noise is very well damped. The steering has slightly artificial weighting, but brake feel is natural, and once you learn to use the higher regenerative braking modes, you can pretty much drive all the time without touching the friction brakes at all.

It's not quite correct to say the Bolt EV drives just like a regular small hatchback, because, fundamentally, it drives better than most regular small hatchbacks. The under-floor battery pack keeps most of the mass low in the chassis—and between the wheels. The front-to-rear weight distribution of 56/44 percent is better than any small front-drive car in this year's field, and it's not far off the 54/46 of the tossable rear-drive Fiat 124 Spider. "If this car were fitted with a set of grippy tires, it'd be a helluva hot hatch," road test editor Chris Walton said. "I'd put it against a Mazda3 or Golf for fun per mile."

There may be some who see the selection of an electric vehicle as *Motor Trend*'s Car of the Year—for only the second time in the award's seven decades—as controversial. But to do so would be to suggest the Bolt EV is nothing more than an automotive oddity, a publicity stunt, or a technological dead end of limited use or value. Nothing could be further from the truth. Here's how the Bolt EV stacks up against the award's six key criteria.

ADVANCEMENT IN DESIGN

The Bolt EV is the sort of tall hatchback you usually see from European and Asian manufacturers. It's a globally relevant vehicle format that has the potential to deliver excellent interior room for up to five passengers along with a high degree of load-carrying functionality in a relatively compact footprint. And in the Bolt EV, Chevy has delivered. This is one of the best-packaged small cars in the world.

The Bolt EV rides on a wheelbase 3.9 inches shorter than that of a Toyota Prius, but it's a massive 14.7 inches shorter bumper to bumper. Despite those packaging constraints, "The space inside

TOP CLASS Design, layout, and materials choices in the Bolt EV interior are excellent for a car in this class, and the cabin is roomy given the car's compact exterior dimensions.

CITY SLICKER Sparkling performance makes the Bolt EV fun to drive, even in the city, and the benchmark range means for many users it will be a viable commuter vehicle that needs recharging only once a week.

That sound? It's the sound of the automotive world shifting on its axis.

SPECS	2017 Chevrolet Bolt EV
Base Price/As Tested	$37,495*/$41,780*
Power (SAE net)	200 hp
Torque (SAE net)	266 lb-ft
Accel, 0-60 mph	6.3 sec
Quarter Mile	14.9 sec @ 93.1 mph
Braking, 60-0 mph	132 ft
Lateral Acceleration	0.77 g (avg)
MT Figure Eight	27.6 sec @ 0.64 g (avg)
EPA City/Hwy/Comb	128/110/119 mpg-e

VEHICLE LAYOUT Front-engine, FWD, 5-pass, 4-door hatchback **MOTOR/TRANSMISSION** Permanent magnet AC synchronous electric; Lithium-ion; 1-speed automatic **CURB WEIGHT (F/R Dist)** 3,548 lb (56/44%) **ENERGY CONSUMPTION, CITY/HWY** 26/31 kW-hrs/100 miles **CO2 EMISSIONS** 0.00 lb/mile (at vehicle)

*Before applicable tax rebates

is stellar," said our spiring Christian Seabaugh, who noted the ample legroom and headroom up front and an "enormously comfortable and roomy" rear seat for a vehicle this size. Indeed, our tallest testers had no problem sitting in the rear even with the front seat racked rearward to accommodate a 6-foot-plus driver.

The interior is well finished for a car for this class, the dash dominated by a textured white trim element that manages to look different without being contrived. The 8.0-inch digital instrument panel and 10.2-inch touchscreen infotainment interface feature modern graphics in a fresh color palette. The simple HVAC controls are well placed and easy to use.

In terms of exterior design, this is a small Chevy with an athletic stance

GLOBAL PLAYER The Bolt EV's size and packaging make it an American car that is globally relevant.

and surprising presence on the street. "The exterior design has a few too many graphic elements with moldings and black areas," Tom Gale said, "but it still ends up growing on you, like a friendly puppy. The line work, gesture, and surfaces all fit the package, and in the end, that is the ultimate test."

Bottom line: The Bolt EV will look and feel as much at home on the streets of Shanghai or Stuttgart as in Seattle.

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE

The Bolt EV has been engineered from the wheels up to be an electric vehicle, and the excellence runs deep.

The 60-kW-hr battery pack, co-developed with and assembled by LG Chem, holds more than triple the energy of the pack in the Chevy Spark EV—but weighs little more than twice as much. Mounted under the floor and rear seat, the battery is also a structural element, contributing 25 percent of the car's overall torsional stiffness. The battery is expected to last the life of the Bolt EV, and it's covered by an eight-year/100,000-mile warranty.

The Bolt EV's electric motor is mounted between the front wheels and is remarkably compact. The motor design draws on GM's long experience with electric powertrains and, like the B motor in the latest generation of the Volt, features carefully arrayed magnets made from a rare earth metal called dysprosium. The Bolt EV develops 200 hp and 266 lb-ft of torque, and its power density is 56 percent greater than the motor in its weaker predecessor, the Spark EV.

As the new motor also spins much faster than the Spark EV's—8,810 rpm versus 4,500 rpm—the single-speed transmission runs a much shorter ratio. That helps propel the 3,548-pound Bolt EV from 0 to 60 mph in 6.3 seconds and cover the standing quarter mile in 14.9 seconds at a speed-limited 93.1 mph. The Bolt EV was comfortably the quickest of all the small cars tested in this year's COTY field—apart from the boy-racer Focus RS, of course—quicker, even, than the Fiat 124 Spider.

The engineering excellence isn't confined to all the electric powertrain hardware and software, either. The front seats feature an industry-first ultra-slim design that uses a metal framework and a flexible plastic shell lined with a very thin layer of foam. Up to seven devices can connect to the available 4G LTE onboard Wi-Fi hot spot, and up to 10 phones can connect to the car. Drive data can be recorded and shared, so Bolt EV owners can compare miles/kW-hr, energy regeneration, and climate efficiency.

EFFICIENCY

In our testing, the Bolt EV easily makes its EPA-certified range of 238 miles in normal driving conditions. Of course, as with a gasoline-powered car, your mileage may vary—flat-foot the Bolt EV everywhere, and you're not going to travel as far before you need to put more energy in the "tank." More important, our testing suggests it's more efficient than the Tesla Model S 60, using about 14 percent fewer kW-hrs of energy to complete our Real MPG test route.

One element in EV operating efficiency is, of course, the time it takes to recharge. Unlike Tesla, GM doesn't have banks of Superchargers. But using a Level 3 charger, our experience supports GM's claim that the Bolt EV can be given 90 miles of range in 30 minutes, 160 miles in 60, and a full charge in two hours. That's not far off Tesla's Supercharger capability.

SAFETY

The Bolt EV has yet to be independently tested by NHTSA or IIHS, but GM says it has engineered the basic structure of the car to deal with the forces of the new small-overlap crash test despite its small overhangs, using an upper cradle and a cross-car beam to stabilize the front end. Five cross-car beams and a structural steel tray not only add to the overall structural integrity but also protect the battery pack in side impact crashes.

The Bolt EV comes standard with a lane departure warning system that despite some self-steering capability is really only to assist drivers. Available driver aids include forward collision alert, cross-traffic alert, blind-spot alert, and pedestrian braking.

VALUE

On the face of it, $37,495 seems a lot for a compact hatchback, but the math deserves some perspective. The federal EV tax credit of $7,500 gets the price down to less than $30,000, which is outstanding value given current electric vehicle tech. And certain state rebates may knock the price down even further. Only a Tesla can offer superior range and performance, and the cheapest Model S 60 costs $67,200 (before rebates). Sure, that Tesla is quicker and faster, but it only has an EPA-certified range of 210 miles. If you want to do better than the Bolt EV, you'll need to spend $74,500 (before rebates) for the Model S 75.

Of course, the Tesla Model 3 is slated to be priced around the same as the Bolt EV and scheduled to start trickling off assembly lines in late 2017. But Tesla has been evasive about prices for a fully equipped vehicle. The Bolt may still maintain its edge here.

What's more significant, however, is the Bolt EV makes a solid value case even against conventional small cars. In terms of its performance levels, the Bolt EV is not that far off a PDK-equipped Golf GTI; only 0.4 second slower to 60 mph and over the quarter mile. And after the rebate is taken into consideration, it's basically the same price. "Range is no longer the limiting factor, and price has been taken out of the equation," Ed Loh said. "The primary barriers have fallen away, and it's getting tougher to find use cases for which the Bolt EV cannot work."

PERFORMANCE OF INTENDED FUNCTION

A roomy, practical, quiet, and comfortable compact hatchback; an energy-efficient small car; and a benchmark electric vehicle—all in one. The marvelously accomplished and endlessly engaging Chevy Bolt EV is all these things. "The important point is that the Bolt is not just a great electric vehicle but also a great commuter vehicle in every respect," Theodore said. "Well done, GM. You are now the leader."

The Bolt EV is also a car for a world that's increasingly urbanized and that needs to reduce its dependency on fossil fuels—partly because there's only so much we can frack and partly because air quality in our cities is again becoming a significant health issue. But this isn't some earnest, po-faced science project we should endure to save the planet. The Bolt EV is fast, fun, and genuinely entertaining to drive. It makes you smile.

American engineering ingenuity and manufacturing capability kick-started automobility in the early 20th century. Now, a little more than a century later, America is about to do it again. The practical, affordable, fun-to-drive Chevrolet Bolt EV has made electric-powered transport for the masses a reality. The 2017 *Motor Trend* Car of the Year is the car of tomorrow, today. ■

POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	2017 Chevrolet Bolt EV
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, FWD
MOTOR TYPE	Permanent magnet AC synchronous electric
BATTERY TYPE	Lithium-ion
POWER (SAE NET)	200 hp
TORQUE (SAE NET)	266 lb-ft
WEIGHT TO POWER	17.7 lb/hp
TRANSMISSION	1-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	7.05:1/7.05:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; torsion beam, coil springs
STEERING RATIO	16.8:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	2.9
BRAKES, F; R	10.9-in vented disc; 10.4-in disc, ABS
WHEELS	6.5 x 17-in cast aluminum
TIRES	215/50R17 91H (M+S) Michelin Energy Saver A/S
DIMENSIONS	
WHEELBASE	102.4 in
TRACK, F/R	59.1/59.1 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	164.0 x 69.5 x 62.8 in
TURNING CIRCLE	35.4 ft
CURB WEIGHT	3,548 lb
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	56/44%
SEATING CAPACITY	5
HEADROOM, F/R	39.7/37.9 in
LEGROOM, F/R	41.6/36.5 in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/R	54.6/52.8 in
CARGO VOL BEH F/R	56.6/16.9 cu ft
TEST DATA	
ACCELERATION TO MPH	
0-30	2.7 sec
0-40	3.7
0-50	4.9
0-60	6.3
0-70	8.1
0-80	10.2
0-90	12.8
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	2.9
QUARTER MILE	14.9 sec @ 93.1 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	132 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.77 g (avg)
MT FIGURE EIGHT	27.6 sec @ 0.64 g (avg)
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	5,800 rpm
CONSUMER INFO	
BASE PRICE	$37,495*
PRICE AS TESTED	$41,780*
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain, front knee
BASIC WARRANTY	3 yrs/36,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	8 yrs/100,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	8 yrs/100,000 miles
BATTERY CAPACITY	60 kW-hr
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	**28.6/26.3/27.8 kW-hrs/100 mi**
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	128/110/119 mpg-e
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	26/31 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	0.00 lb/mile (at vehicle)
RECOMMENDED FUEL	110-volt, 220-volt electricity

*Before applicable tax rebates

CAR OF THE YEAR POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	2017 Audi A4 Quattro (Premium Plus)	2017 Cadillac CT6 2.0T (Luxury); **3.0TT AWD (Platinum)**	2017 Chrysler Pacifica Touring; **Limited**	2017 Genesis G90 3.3T (AWD Premium); **5.0 (RWD Ultimate)**
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, AWD	Front-engine, RWD; **AWD**	Front-engine, FWD	Front-engine, AWD; **RWD**
ENGINE TYPE (POWER UNIT)	Turbocharged I-4, iron block/ alum head	Turbocharged I-4, alum block/ head; **twin-turbo 60-deg V-6, alum block/heads**	60-deg V-6, alum block/heads	Twin-turbo 60-deg V-6, alum block/heads; **90-deg V-8, alum block/heads**
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	121.1 cu in/1,984 cc	121.9 cu in/1,998cc; **182.1 cu in/2,983cc**	220.0 cu in/3,605 cc	204.0 cu in/3,342cc; **307.4 cu in/5,038cc**
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.6:1	9.5:1/9.8:1	11.3:1	10.0:1; **12.0:1**
POWER (SAE NET)	252 hp @ 5,600 rpm	265 hp @ 5,500 rpm*; **404 hp @ 5,700 rpm***	287 hp @ 6,400 rpm	365 hp @ 6,000 rpm; **420 hp @ 6,000 rpm**
TORQUE (SAE NET)	273 lb-ft @ 1,600 rpm	295 lb-ft @ 3,000 rpm*; **400 lb-ft @ 2,500 rpm***	262 lb-ft @ 4,000 rpm	376 lb-ft @ 1,300 rpm; **383 lb-ft @ 5,000 rpm**
REDLINE	6,800 rpm	6,500; **6,000 rpm**	6,400 rpm	6,500 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	14.4 lb/hp	14.7; **10.9 lb/hp**	16.0 lb/hp	12.9; **11.4 lb/hp**
TRANSMISSION	7-speed twin-clutch automatic	8-speed automatic	9-speed automatic	8-speed automatic
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	4.23:1/1.63:1	3.27:1/2.16:1; **3.27:1/2.13:1**	3.25:1/1.56:1	3.54:1/1:97:1; **3.54:1/2.02:1**
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	15.9:1	16.3:1; **14.6:1**	16.2:1	12.9:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	2.8	2.5; **2.4**	3.1	2.5
BRAKES, F; R	13.3-in vented disc; 13.0-in vented disc, ABS	12.6-; **13.6-in vented disc**; 12.4-in vented disc, ABS	13.0-in vented, disc; 13.0-in disc, ABS	14.2-; **14.8-in vented disc;** 13.4-in vented disc, ABS
WHEELS, F; R	8.0 x 18 in cast aluminum	8.5 x 19-in; **8.5 x 20-in cast aluminum**	7.0 x 17-in; **7.5 x 18-in cast aluminum**	8.5 x 19-in; 9.5 x 19-in cast aluminum
TIRES, F; R Six tire makers!	245/40R18 97Y Hankook Ventus S1 Evo2	245/45R19 98V (M+S); **245/40R20 95W Goodyear Eagle Touring**	235/65R17 104T (M+S) Yokohama AVID S34 BluEarth; **235/60R18 103H (M+S) Bridgestone Turanza EL 440**	245/45R19 98W (M+S); 275/40R19 101W (M+S) Continental ContiProContact
DIMENSIONS				
WHEELBASE	111.0 in	122.4 in	121.6 in	124.4 in
TRACK, F/R	61.9/61.2 in	63.4/64.0 in	68.3/68.3 in	64.6/64.5 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	186.1 x 72.5 x 56.2 in	204.0 x 74.0 x 57.9 in	203.8 x 79.6 x 69.9 in	204.9 x 75.4 x 58.9 in
TURNING CIRCLE	38.1 ft	40.0; **37.1 ft** Tighter circle with AWD?! Thanks, rear steer!	39.7 ft	39.2 ft
CURB WEIGHT	3,623 lb	3,893; **4,389 lb**	4,372; **4,584 lb**	4,693; **4,802 lb** Heavy Weights
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	56/44%	51/49; **53/47%**	56/44% And you don't have to take the seats out	52/48; **51/49%**
SEATING CAPACITY	5	5	8; **7**	5
HEADROOM, F/M/R	38.9/37.4/– in	40.1/38.0/– in	40.1/39.6/38.7 in	41.1/38.0/– in
LEGROOM, F/M/R	41.3/35.7/– in	42.4/40.2/– in	41.1/39.0/36.5 in	46.3/37.8/– in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/M/R	55.9/54.5/– in	58.2/56.2/– in	63.8/63.0/61.2 in	59.1/57.9/– in
CARGO VOLUME, TRUNK (OR BEH F/M/R)	13.0 cu ft	15.3 cu ft	140.5/87.5/32.3 cu ft	15.7 cu ft
TEST DATA				
ACCELERATION TO MPH				
0-30, 0-40	1.8, 2.7 sec	1.8; **1.6**, 3.1; **2.7 sec**	2.3; **2.7**, 3.6; **4.1 sec**	1.9; **1.9**, 2.9; **2.8 sec**
0-50, 0-60	3.9, 5.3	4.6; **3.8**, 6.4; **5.1**	4.9; **5.7**, 6.7; **7.7**	4.0; **3.8**, 5.4; **5.0**
0-70, 0-80	7.0, 9.1	8.4; **6.6**, 10.8; **8.3**	8.8; **10.1**, 11.1; **12.7**	7.0; **6.5**, 8.8; **8.1**
0-90, 0-100	11.5, 14.4	13.7; **10.3**, –; **13.0**	14.1; **–**, –; **–**	11.1; **10.0**, 13.7; **12.3**
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	2.8	3.6; **2.6**	3.5; **4.0**	2.7; **2.5**
QUARTER MILE	13.9 sec @ 98.6 mph	14.7 sec @ 92.8 mph; **13.6 sec @ 102.3 mph**	15.1 sec @ 92.4 mph; **15.9 sec @ 89.6 mph**	13.9 sec @ 100.7 mph; **13.5 sec @ 104.5 mph**
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	105 ft	117; **115 ft**	131; **130 ft**	117; **119 ft**
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.92 g (avg)	0.82; **0.83g (avg)**	0.79; **0.82 g (avg)**	0.83; **0.83 g (avg)**
MT FIGURE EIGHT	25.3 sec @ 0.74 g (avg)	26.7 sec @ 0.66 g (avg); **25.9 sec @ 0.72 g (avg)**	27.5 sec @ 0.62 g (avg): **27.5 sec @ 0.62 g (avg)**	26.9 sec @ 0.67 g (avg); **26.7 sec @ 0.68 g (avg)**
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,260 rpm Lowest	1,600 rpm	1,400 rpm	1,600 rpm
CONSUMER INFO				
BASE PRICE	$44,150	$59,390; **$88,490**	$31,490; **$43,490**	$71,550; **$70,650**
PRICE AS TESTED	$47,900	$69,010; **$91,580**	$33,475; **$48,280**	$71,550; **$70,650**
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain, front knee	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain, front knee	Dual front, front side , f/m/r curtain, front knee	Dual front, f/r side, f/r curtain, driver knee Still The Best
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles	3 yrs/36,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles	6 yrs/70,000 miles	5 yrs/60,000 miles	10 yrs/100,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	4 yrs/Unlimited miles	6 yrs/70,000 miles Close to EPA	5 yrs/100,000 miles	5 yrs/Unlimited miles
FUEL (BATTERY) CAPACITY	15.3 gal	19.5 gal	19.0 gal	21.9 gal
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	21.3/32.6/25.2 mpg	20.0/37.2/25.2; **17.8/24.5/20.3 mpg**	18.4/28.9/22.0 mpg; **not tested**	17.1/26.2/20.2 mpg; **not tested**
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	24/31/27 mpg	22/30/25; **18/26/21 mpg**	18/28/22 mpg	17/24/20; **16/24/19 mpg**
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	140/109 kW-hrs/100 miles	153/112 kW-hrs/100 miles; **187/130 kW-hrs/100 miles**	187/120 kW-hrs/100 miles	198/140 kW-hrs/100 miles; **211/140 kW-hrs/100 miles**
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	0.73 lb/mile	0.78; **0.93 lb/mile**	0.90 lb/mile	0.99; **1.03 lb/mile** Yikes!
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded premium	Unleaded premium	Unleaded regular	Unleaded premium

2017 Jaguar XE 20d AWD; **35t (R-Sport)**	**2017 Porsche 911** Carrera	**2016 Tesla Model S** 60	**2017 Volvo S90** T6 AWD Inscription
Front-engine, AWD; **RWD**	Rear-engine, RWD	Rear-motor, RWD	Front-engine, AWD
Turbodiesel I-4, alum block/head; **supercharged 90-deg V-6, alum block/heads**	Twin-turbo flat-6 alum block/heads	Three-phase four-pole AC-induction electric motor	Turbo- & supercharged I-4, alum block/head
DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl	N/A	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
122.0 cu in/2,000cc; **182.7 cu in/2,995cc**	181.0 cu in/2,966 cc	N/A	120.1 cu in/1,969 cc
15.5:1; **10.5:1**	10.0:1	N/A	10.3:1
180 hp @ 4,000 rpm; **340 hp @ 6,500 rpm**	370 hp @ 6,500 rpm	315 hp @ 5,000 rpm	316 hp @ 5,700 rpm
317 lb-ft @ 1,750 rpm; **332 lb-ft @ 4,500 rpm**	331 lb-ft @ 1,700 rpm	325 lb-ft @ 0 rpm	295 lb-ft @ 2,200 rpm
4,800; **6,500 rpm**	7,400 rpm	Not indicated (14,700 rpm)	6,600 rpm (max engine speed 6,000)
21.9; **11.5 lb/hp**	8.7 lb/hp	14.1 lb/hp	13.1 lb/hp
8-speed automatic	7-speed manual	1-speed automatic	8-speed automatic
2.73:1/1.82:1; **3.23:1/2.15:1**	3.44:1/2.13:1	9.73:1/9.73:1	3.20:1/2.15:1
Control arms, coil springs, **adj shocks**, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, **adj shocks**, anti-roll bar	Struts, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar	Control arms, coil springs, adj shocks, anti-roll bar; multilink, transverse leaf spring, adj shocks, anti-roll bar
11.3-15.7:1	12.5-16.6:1 Still love quick P-Car steering	13.0:1	16.5:1 Didn't feel this "slow"
2.6	2.5	2.3	2.9
12.8-in vented, disc; 12.8-in vented, disc, ABS	13.0-in vented, drilled disc; 13.0-in vented, drilled disc, ABS	14.0-in vented disc; 14.4-in vented disc, ABS	13.6-in vented disc; 12.6-in vented disc, ABS
7.5 x 18-in; **8.0 x 20-in; 9.0 x 20-in cast aluminum**	8.5 x 19-in; 11.5 x 19-in forged aluminum	8.0 x 19-in cast aluminum	8.5 x 20-in cast aluminum
225/45R18 95H (M+S) Continental ProContact GX; **235/35R20 92Y; 265/30R20 94Y Pirelli P Zero**	235/40ZR19 92Y; 295/35ZR19 100Y Yokohama Advan Sport V105	245/45R19 98W (M+S) Goodyear Eagle Touring	255/35R20 97W Pirelli P Zero
111.6 in	96.5 in	116.5 in	115.8 in
63.1/63.1; **62.8/62.9 in**	60.7/59.8 in	65.4/66.9 in	63.7/63.7 in
183.9 x 72.8 x 55.7 in	177.1 x 71.2 x 50.9 in	196.0 x 77.3 x 56.5 in	195.4 x 74.0 x 56.8 in
38.4 ft	36.7 ft	37.0 ft	38.7 ft
3,950; **3,913 lb**	3,221 lb	4,434 lb Splits the CT6 Twins	4,148 lb
51/49%	38/62%	47/53%	55/45%
5	2+2	5	5
37.0/37.0/– in	37.7/32.2/– in	38.8/35.3/– in	37.4/37.8/– in
41.5/35.0/– in	42.2/27.1/– in	42.7/35.4/– in	42.2/35.9/– in
56.8/54.7/– in	51.3/47.9/– in	57.7/55.0/– in	57.5/55.9/– in
14.7 cu ft	5.1 cu ft	5.3 (fr), 26.3-58.1 (rr) cu ft	17.7 cu ft
2.7; **1.5**, 4.5; **2.4 sec**	1.5, 2.1 sec	2.2, 3.0 sec	2.0, 3.0 sec
6.3; **3.3**, 8.8; **4.5**	3.0, 3.9 Quickest	3.9, 5.0	4.1, 5.6
11.7; **5.7**, 15.2; **7.3**	4.9, 6.4	6.3, 8.0	7.3, 9.3
–; **8.9**, –; **11.1** Slowest	7.8, 9.4	10.0, 12.5	11.7, 14.5
4.7; **2.3**	1.8	2.2	2.9
16.6 sec @ 83.5 mph; **12.9 sec @ 106.2 mph**	12.3 sec @ 113.9 mph	13.6 sec @ 103.5 mph	14.1 sec @ 98.9 mph
123; **104 ft**	98 ft	121 ft	107 ft
0.83; **0.94 g (avg)**	1.03 g (avg)	0.86 g (avg)	0.88 g (avg)
27.2 sec @ 0.62 g (avg); **24.9 sec @ 0.79 g (avg)**	23.5 sec @ 0.86 g (avg)	26.5 sec @ 0.70 g (avg)	26.3 sec @ 0.68 g (avg)
1,500; **1,750 rpm** Highest	1,600 rpm	7,350 rpm	1,600 rpm
$39,895; **$50,195**	$90,450	$67,200**	$57,245
$55,485; **$59,635**	$97,010	$71,200**	$66,105
Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes	Yes/Yes
Dual front, front side, f/r curtain	Dual front, fr side, fr head, fr knee	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain, front knee	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain, driver knee
5 yrs/60,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles
5 yrs/60,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles Hmm	8 yrs/Unlimited miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles
5 yrs/60,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles	4 yrs/50,000 miles	4 yrs/Unlimited miles
14.8; **16.6 gal**	16.9 gal	Lithium-ion battery pack, 60 kW-hr (75!)	15.9 gal
31.1/44.0/35.8; **22.5/29.5/25.2 mpg** Beat EPA!	Not tested	35.7/30.3/33.3 kW-hrs/100 miles	16.4/31.2/20.8 mpg Below EPA
30/40/34; **21/30/24 mpg**	20/29/23 mpg	97/100/98 mpg-e	22/31/25 mpg
126/94 kW-hrs/100 miles; **160/112 kW-hrs/100 miles**	169/116 kW-hrs/100 miles	34/33 kW-hrs/100 miles	153/109 kW-hrs/100 miles
0.66; **0.80 lb/mile**	0.83 lb/mile	0.00 lb/mi (at vehicle)	0.77 lb/mile
Diesel; **unleaded premium**	Unleaded premium	110-volt, 220-volt electricity	Unleaded premium

LEGEND Notably **GOOD** Notably **POOR** *SAE Certified, **Before applicable tax rebates

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

VALID *NOW* ON 5,000+ ITEMS

20% OFF
ANY SINGLE ITEM

99293972

Limit 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, automotive lifts, compressors, floor jacks, saw mills, storage cabinets, chests or carts, trailers, trenchers, welders, Admiral, Badland, Bremen, CoverPro, Creekstone, Daytona, Dobile, Doyle, Drummond, Earthquake, Franklin, Hercules, Holt, Jupiter, Lynx, Maddox, Portland, Predator, Quam, StormCat, Union, Viking, Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17.

SUPER COUPON

FREE
WITH *ANY* PURCHASE

27 LED PORTABLE WORKLIGHT/ FLASHLIGHT

ITEM 67227 shown
69567/60566
62532

$10.41 VALUE

99293739

LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one FREE GIFT coupon per customer per day.

PREDATOR GENERATORS

RELIABLE • FUEL EFFICIENT • SUPER QUIET
CONTINUOUS CLEAN POWER FOR SENSITIVE ELECTRONICS

2000 PEAK/1600 RUNNING WATTS 2.8 HP (79.7 CC) PORTABLE INVERTER GENERATOR

Customer Rating ★★★★★

ITEM 62523

NEW

SAVE $599

~~$499.99~~

comp at $999

SUPER COUPON
$399.99

99293755

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PREDATOR BEATS HONDA

	★ BEST BUY WINNER ★ 3 YEARS IN A ROW	
YES	ELECTRIC START	YES
420cc	ENGINE SIZE	389cc
7000	RATED WATTS	5500
8750	PEAK WATTS	6500
8-13 HRS	RUN-TIME *	8-13 HRS
~~$599.99~~	PRICE	$2,700

*As rated by leading consumer product testing publication

SUPER COUPON
$529.99

8750 PEAK / 7000 RUNNING WATTS 13 HP (420 CC) GAS GENERATORS

ITEM 63086/69671/68530/63085 shown
ITEM 63087/63088/68525/69677 CA. ONLY

Wheel kit and battery sold separately

99292595

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

#1 SELLING JACKS IN THE WORLD

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

HEAVY DUTY RAPID PUMP® FLOOR JACKS

LIGHTWEIGHT ALUMINUM

- Dual parallel pump system
- Pit crew quality design

SAVE $60

Customer Rating ★★★★★

ITEM 69252/68053/62160
62496/62516/60569 shown

LIFTS FROM 3-1/2" TO 14-1/8"

1.5 TON CAPACITY

SUPER COUPON
$59.99

~~$89.99~~

comp at $119.99

99290619

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HEAVY DUTY STEEL

- Precision welded construction
- Industrial quality for professional mechanics

SAVE $66

Customer Rating ★★★★★

ITEM 69227/62116
62584/68048 shown

LIFTS FROM 5" TO 18-1/4"

3 TON CAPACITY

SUPER COUPON
$74.99

~~$89.99~~

comp at $141.88

99291658

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

EARTHQUAKE XT BEATS Snap-on*

Snap-on
MODEL MG725

1190 FT. LBS.	BOLT BREAKAWAY TORQUE	1190 FT. LBS.
90 dB	SOUND LEVEL	90 dB
4.8 LBS.	WEIGHT	4.4 LBS.
$505	PRICE	~~$149.99~~

*Based on actual product comparison testing.

- One handed push button forward/reverse
- Composite construction state of the art technology

1/2" PRO COMPOSITE XTREME TORQUE AIR IMPACT WRENCH

Customer Rating ★★★★★

ITEM 62891

99295034

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER COUPON
$129.99

Earthquake XT
MODEL EQ12XT

THE WORLD'S BEST IMPACT WRENCH
SEE FOR YOURSELF - 90 DAY RISK FREE TRIAL

EARTHQUAKE
1/2" INDUSTRIAL QUALITY IMPACT WRENCH

ITEM 62627
68424 shown

700 FT. LBS. MAX. TORQUE

WEIGHS 6 LBS.

~~$99.99~~
comp at $259.99

SAVE $180

SUPER COUPON
$79.99

Customer Rating ★★★★★

99297230

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

DAYTONA BEATS Snap-on

PROFESSIONAL SUPER DUTY STEEL JACK

DAYTONA
MODEL DJ3000

3 YEAR WARRANTY

90 DAY RISK FREE TRIAL

Snap-on
MODEL FJ200

3 TON	CAPACITY	2 TON
23-1/8"	LIFT HEIGHT	23"
3-3/4"	CLEARANCE	3-1/2"
~~$199.99~~	PRICE	$499.99

SUPER COUPON
$179.99

3 TON SUPER DUTY STEEL JACK ITEM 63183

99296940

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

LOW PROFILE
HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

Customer Rating ★★★★★

- Extra-low profile reach and high lift makes it the most versatile floor jack in the marketplace

ITEM 61282 shown
61253/62326

3 TON CAPACITY

SAVE $185

SUPER COUPON
$84.99

~~$99.99~~
comp at $269.99

99294369

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

SUPER-LIGHTWEIGHT • SUPER QUIET
BEST IN CLASS • CRAZY LOW PRICE

EARTHQUAKE
Customer Rating ★★★★★

1/2" COMPOSITE SUPER HIGH TORQUE PRO IMPACT WRENCH

ITEM 62835

800 FT. LBS. MAX. TORQUE

WEIGHS 5 LBS.

SAVE $210

SUPER COUPON
$99.99

~~$129.99~~
comp at $309.99

99294014

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

EARTHQUAKE
Customer Rating ★★★★½

SUPER COMPACT! EXTREME POWER! ULTRA-LIGHTWEIGHT AND QUIET 1/2" STUBBY AIR IMPACT WRENCH

SAVE $60

ITEM 63064

550 FT. LBS. MAX. TORQUE

WEIGHS 2.75 LBS.

SUPER COUPON
$79.99

~~$99.99~~
comp at $139.99

99295518

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

VIKING™ BIG POWER SMALL PRICE

LITHIUM ION JUMP STARTER AND POWER PACK

- Lithium-ion for long life, fast recharging
- 450 cranking amps for quick, reliable jump starting
- 12 amp hours of DC power for electronic devices
- Compact, just 6-1/4" long – fits easily in your glovebox

450 PEAK AMPS

2.0A USB POWER

SUPER COUPON $59.99

~~$69.99~~ NEW

ITEM 62749

comp at $139.99

SAVE $80

99299582

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

PACIFIC HYDROSTAR

1650 PSI PRESSURE WASHER

Customer Rating ★★★★½

ITEM 69488

SAVE $70

1.3 GPM

SUPER COUPON $79.99

~~$99.99~~

comp at $149.99

99298919

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING

170 AMP MIG/FLUX WIRE WELDER

SAVE $380

Customer Rating ★★★★½

WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF WELDING WIRE AND ACCESSORIES

~~$184.99~~

comp at $549.99

ITEM 61888

68885 shown

SUPER COUPON $169.99

99297762

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

WELDING STORAGE CABINET

Customer Rating ★★★★★

SAVE $70

2Xs THE CAPACITY AT 1/2 THE PRICE

Welder and supplies sold separately.

SUPER COUPON $149.99

~~$169.99~~

comp at $219.99

ITEM 62275

61705 shown

LIMIT 4 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

240 VOLT INVERTER PLASMA CUTTER WITH DIGITAL DISPLAY

Customer Rating ★★★★½

SAVE $1062

SUPER COUPON $649.99

ITEM 62204

~~$699.99~~

comp at $1712.75

99298865

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET WITH BLUE FLAME DESIGN

Customer Rating ★★★★½

SAVE $88

SUPER COUPON $41.99

~~$54.99~~

comp at $129.99

ITEM 61610

63122

91214 shown

99299499

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

US★GENERAL

26", 4 DRAWER TOOL CART

SAVE $219

ITEM 95659 shown 61634/61952

Customer Rating

- 580 lb. capacity

~~$159.99~~ comp at $319.01

SUPER COUPON

$99.99

99303164

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

US★GENERAL PRO

INDUSTRIAL QUALITY

PIT CREW'S CHOICE

- Rolled edges on drawers
- Strong and smooth ball-bearing slides

- Heavy-duty casters for mobility when fully loaded

- Gas struts on lids for easy opening and closing

INCLUDES FREE DRAWER LINERS

PITTSBURGH MOTORCYCLE

TOP QUALITY • LOWEST PRICES

1000 LB. CAPACITY MOTORCYCLE LIFT

ITEM 69904 68892 shown

Customer Rating

- Lift range: 7" - 30"

SAVE $874

SUPER COUPON

$299.99

~~$429.99~~ comp at $1173.99

99302214

LIMIT 5 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

US★GENERAL PRO SUPER COUPON

56", 8 DRAWER TOP CHEST

Customer Rating

$399.99

~~$429.99~~ comp at $1029.99

ITEM 62662 61370 shown

99303374

LIMIT 3 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

US★GENERAL PRO SUPER COUPON

56", 11 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL CABINET

Customer Rating

$699.99

~~$799.99~~ comp at $1799.99

ITEM 69395/67681 shown

99302439

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HaulMaster

17 FT. TYPE I A MULTI-TASK LADDER

- 300 lb. capacity
- 23 configurations

ITEM 62514 62656/67646 shown

SAVE $258

SUPER COUPON

$99.99

~~$139.99~~ comp at $357.99

Customer Rating

99301021

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US★GENERAL PRO SUPER COUPON

26" 16 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET

- 1060 lb. capacity
- 14,600 cu. in. of storage

Customer Rating

$319.99

SAVE $633

ITEM 61609 67831 shown

~~$369.99~~ comp at $952.99

99302918

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We FedEx. Most Orders in 24 Hours Order at HarborFreight.com or 800·423·2567

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

CENTRALPNEUMATIC®

2.5 HP 21 GALLON 25 PSI VERTICAL AIR COMPRESSOR

AIR DELIVERY:
4.7 SCFM @ 90 PSI
5.8 SCFM @ 40 PSI

Customer Rating

SAVE $347

ITEM 69091/61454
61693/62803
67847 shown

SUPER COUPON
$149.99
$179.99 comp at $497

99305293

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"The Perfect Compressor with Powerful, Quiet and Consistent Airflow... Plus We Love the Low Price"

3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS AIR COMPRESSORS

HOT DOG
ITEM 69269
97080 shown

SAVE 59%

YOUR CHOICE
$39.99

Customer Rating

$59.99 comp at $98.62

99304305

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PANCAKE
ITEM 95275 shown
60637/61615

RETRACTABLE AIR HOSE REEL WITH 3/8" x 50 FT. HOSE

ITEM 93897 shown
69265/62344

Customer Rating

SUPER COUPON
$59.99

SAVE $129

$89.99 comp at $189

99305775

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Diablo™

HEAVY DUTY RUBBER AIR HOSES

3/8" x 50 FT. HEAVY DUTY RUBBER AIR HOSE

TWICE THE QUALITY AT HALF THE PRICE!

Customer Rating

SAVE 33%

ITEM 61939/62884
69580/62890 shown

$24.99 comp at $29.98

SUPER COUPON
$19.99

99304175

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1/4" AIR ANGLE DIE GRINDER

SUPER COUPON
$9.99

SAVE 85%

$14.99 comp at $69.98

ITEM 62439
69945
32046 shown

Customer Rating

99305068

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6" SELF-VACUUMING AIR PALM SANDER

SAVE $80

ITEM 60628
98895 shown

$34.99 comp at $99.99

SUPER COUPON
$19.99

99306745

Customer Rating

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20 OZ. GRAVITY FEED SPRAY GUN

Customer Rating

SUPER COUPON
$9.99

SAVE 79%

ITEM 47016 shown
67181/62300

$15.99 comp at $49

99303868

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CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

10 AMP DEEP CUT VARIABLE SPEED BAND SAW KIT

SAVE $179

- One 14 TPI blade included

Customer Rating

ITEM 62800

SUPER COUPON

$99.99

EXTRA LARGE CAPACITY

~~$139.99~~ comp at $279

99307113

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RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE

ITEM 61884
62370/65570 shown

SAVE 66%

Customer Rating

SUPER COUPON

$19.99

~~$29.99~~ comp at $59

99308747

LIMIT 6 - Good at our stores or HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Cannot be used with other discount or coupon or prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 3/14/17. Limit one coupon per customer per day.

HARBOR FREIGHT

QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

BADLAND BATTLE TESTED

#1 IN OFF-ROAD WINCHING

12,000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE

SAVE $453

Customer Rating

ITEM
61256
61889
60813 shown

SUPER COUPON

$299.99

~~$399.99~~ comp at $752.99

99307838

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PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE 1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE

SUPER COUPON

$99.99

Customer Rating

SAVE $169

~~$179.99~~ comp at $269

ITEM 69512
61858
69445 shown

99309563

- Includes Ram, Hook and Chain

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2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL

ITEM 61840/61297/68146/61258 shown

SAVE $105

Customer Rating

SUPER COUPON

$54.99

~~$89.99~~ comp at $159.99

26557288

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CENTECH 12 VOLT DELUXE BATTERY MAINTAINER AND FLOAT CHARGER

SAVE 75%

Customer Rating

ITEM 63161
62813/61911 shown

SUPER COUPON

$14.99

~~$19.99~~ comp at $59.99

99307151

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HARDY MECHANIC'S GLOVES

Customer Rating

SIZE	ITEM
MED	62434/62426
LG	62433/62428
X-LG	62432/62429

Item 62429 shown

YOUR CHOICE $3.99

NEW

SAVE 73%

~~$5.99~~ comp at $14.97

99310043

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PREDATOR HIGHEST RATING FOR POWER, PERFORMANCE AND RELIABILITY

Customer Rating

6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINES

ITEM 60363/69730

ITEM 68121/69727 shown
CALIFORNIA ONLY

SUPER COUPON

$99.99

SAVE $228

~~$119.99~~ comp at $328

99315081

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OPENING A NEW STORE EVERY 3 DAYS

HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

SUPER COUPON

Bunker Hill Security®

4 CHANNEL *WIRELESS* SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM WITH 2 CAMERAS

ITEM 62368

NEW

WITH NIGHT VISION

SUPER COUPON

$239.99

$279.99 comp at $499.99

SAVE $260

Customer Rating

99313096

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SUPER COUPON

drillmaster

Customer Rating

18 VOLT CORDLESS 3/8" DRILL/DRIVER WITH KEYLESS CHUCK

ITEM 69651
62868/62873
68239 shown

Includes one 18V NiCd battery and charger.

SAVE 65%

$16.99

$19.99 comp at $49.21

99312107

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SUPER COUPON

ROTATING MAGNETIC LED WORK LIGHT

Customer Rating

ITEM 63422/62955 shown

NEW

- 180 lumens
- Magnetic base

SAVE 63%

$7.99 $9.99 comp at $21.87

99316391

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SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating

WARRIOR

NEW

SAVE 78%

29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED HIGH SPEED STEEL DRILL BIT SET

ITEM 62281
61637 shown

$12.99

$19.99 comp at $59.97

99311783

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SUPER COUPON

CENTRAL MACHINERY

Customer Rating

20 TON SHOP PRESS

ITEM 32879/60603 shown

- Pair of arbor plates included

SAVE $215

$154.99

$199.99 comp at $369.99

99316148

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

LOW-PROFILE CREEPER

SAVE 75%

ITEM 69262
69094/61916
2745 shown

$19.99 $27.99 comp at $79.99

Tools sold separately.

- 300 lb. capacity

Customer Rating

99317704

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

VEHICLE POSITIONING WHEEL DOLLY

ITEM 62234
61917 shown

Customer Rating

- 1250 lb. capacity

SAVE $72

NEW

$69.99 $99.99 comp at $142.97

99319897

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH

Customer Rating

130 PIECE TOOL KIT WITH CASE

ITEM 63091/69331
63248/68998 shown

SAVE 66%

$29.99

$89.99 comp at $89.98

99313102

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SUPER COUPON

7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE WEATHER RESISTANT TARP

SAVE 64%

ITEM 69249/69115/69137
69129/69121/877 shown

$2.99

$4.99 comp at $8.48

Customer Rating

99311156

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SUPER COUPON

4-1/2" 40 GRIT METAL CUT-OFF WHEELS PACK OF 10

ITEM 61195/45430 shown

WARRIOR

Customer Rating

SAVE 66%

$5.99 $7.99 comp at $17.98

99318352

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SUPER COUPON

SAVE 65%

Customer Rating

HaulMaster

STEP STOOL/ WORKING PLATFORM

ITEM 62515/66911 shown

- 350 lb. capacity

$19.99

$29.99 comp at $57.55

99320199

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SUPER COUPON

3" HIGH SPEED AIR CUT-OFF TOOL

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

ITEM 60243/60374
67425/69473
47077 shown

Customer Rating

SAVE 72%

$5.99

$7.99 comp at $21.97

99310918

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SUPER COUPON

PITTSBURGH PRO

1/2" DRIVE 25" BREAKER BAR

ITEM 60819/67933 shown

$8.99

$12.99 comp at $24.99

SAVE 64%

Customer Rating

99312212

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SUPER COUPON

.50 CAL METAL AMMO CAN

ITEM 63181

$12.99

$15.99 comp at $21.99

SAVE 40%

99320448

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SUPER COUPON

4 PIECE ANTI-FATIGUE FOAM MAT SET

Customer Rating

ITEM 61607/62389 • Each pad measures 25" x 25"
94635 shown

$6.99

$9.99 comp at $17.97

SAVE 61%

99320831

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HARBOR FREIGHT
QUALITY TOOLS AT RIDICULOUSLY LOW PRICES

SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH PRO

TORQUE WRENCHES

- Accuracy within ±4%

Item 239 shown

SAVE 66%

YOUR CHOICE $9.99 ~~$21.99~~

comp at $29.99

Customer Rating

DRIVE	ITEM
1/4"	2696/61277
3/8"	807/61276
1/2"	62431/239

99314717

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SUPER COUPON — HARDY

POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100

SIZE	ITEM
MED	68496/61363
LG	68497/61360
X-LG	68498/61359

SAVE 62%

YOUR CHOICE $5.99 ~~$7.99~~

comp at $15.99

Customer Rating

- 5 mil thickness

Item 68498 shown

99314100

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SUPER COUPON — PORTLAND

1.5 HP ELECTRIC POLE SAW

ITEM 68862/63190/62896 shown

SAVE $34

SUPER COUPON

$64.99

~~$84.99~~

comp at $99

- Extends from 6 ft. to 8 ft. 10"

Customer Rating

99314218

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SUPER COUPON

900 PEAK/700 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) 2 CYCLE GAS RECREATIONAL GENERATOR

ITEM 60338/69381 shown

SAVE $73

Customer Rating

$89.99 ~~$119.99~~

comp at $163.06

99313638

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH

Customer Rating

9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS

SAE
ITEM 63282/69043/42304 shown

METRIC
ITEM 42305/69044/63171

SAVE 70%

YOUR CHOICE $5.99 ~~$8.99~~

comp at $19.97

99313295

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SUPER COUPON — drillmaster

4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

ITEM 95578/69645/60625 shown

SAVE 50%

WE CARRY A FULL LINE OF GRINDING AND CUT-OFF WHEELS

Customer Rating

$9.99 ~~$14.99~~

comp at $20.26

99314997

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SUPER COUPON — HaulMaster

72" x 80" MOVING BLANKET

ITEM 66537 shown
69505/62418

Customer Rating

SAVE 66%

$5.99 ~~$8.99~~

comp at $17.97

99314637

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

42" OFF-ROAD/ FARM JACK

ITEM 60668/6530 shown

SAVE 23%

- 3-1/2 ton capacity

Customer Rating

$45.99

~~$57.99~~

comp at $59.99

99321466

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SUPER COUPON

FULL-MOTION TV WALL MOUNT

ITEM 63155

$34.99

NEW

~~$49.99~~

SAVE 57%

comp at $82.58

99328088

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SUPER COUPON

8 BIN LARGE PORTABLE PARTS STORAGE CASE

Hardware sold separately

ITEM 93927

SAVE 41%

Customer Rating

$9.99 ~~$13.99~~

comp at $16.97

99322489

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

SAVE 66%

5 PIECE AUTO TRIM AND MOLDING TOOL SET

ITEM 67021

$5.99 ~~$8.99~~

Customer Rating

comp at $17.99

99326117

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH

32 PIECE SCREWDRIVER SET

ITEM 61259/90764 shown

Customer Rating

SAVE 59%

$5.99 ~~$8.99~~

comp at $14.88

99321826

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

Customer Rating

MULTI-USE TRANSFER PUMP

ITEM 66418 shown
61364/62961/63144

SAVE 65%

$4.99 ~~$6.99~~

comp at $14.37

99322965

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SUPER COUPON — PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

12 VOLT, 250 PSI AIR COMPRESSOR

ITEM 61740/63109/63152
4077 shown

$6.99 ~~$9.99~~

SAVE 41%

comp at $11.99

99327832

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CHEVROLET CAMARO SS

GARAGE

Words *Motor Trend Editors*

ARRIVAL 2017 Mini Cooper S Clubman All4 Alex Nishimoto

"Mini enters new territory with the second-gen Clubman, which offers C-segment dimensions, more premium features, and AWD." @MT_NishiMOTOR

EPA CITY/HWY/COMB FUEL ECON 22/31/26 MPG BASE PRICE $30,300 PRICE AS TESTED $38,750

Until 2007, the reborn Mini lineup offered just one model in many different variants. That changed when the Clubman arrived for the 2008 model year. Although it was longer than the standard Cooper hatch, the first-gen Clubman was still very much a small car. The second-gen model attempts to retain that Mini character, but it's much more maxi than before.

The second iteration of the Clubman is more than a foot longer and 4.6 inches wider, and it has a wheelbase 4.8 inches longer than the model it replaces. Length- and width-wise, the new Clubman is the biggest Mini yet—about the size and heft of a Volkswagen Golf. It's positioned as a more premium model, an impression you'll get from the interior and also from its smooth (for a compact) highway ride. The new Clubman also becomes a little more practical, ditching the single passenger-side half-door for a pair of actual front-hinged rear doors for access to the rear seat. (The cargo doors are pretty much as they were in the first generation.) In addition, the Clubman adds the option of all-wheel drive.

To find out how these big changes to the Clubman formula affect the most wagonlike Mini in the lineup, we've taken delivery of a long-term 2017 Mini Clubman Cooper S ALL4. Being an S model, our car comes equipped with a 2.0-liter turbocharged I-4, which produces the same 189 hp and 207 lb-ft of torque it does in the Hardtop and Convertible Cooper S. That power is routed to all four wheels through an eight-speed automatic transmission and Mini's ALL4 all-wheel-drive system, which was first offered in the Countryman.

The peppy Cooper S turbo-four combined with all-wheel drive is good for 0–60 mph in 7 seconds flat, which is decently quick when you consider this Clubman weighs 3,451 pounds. Not only is our long-termer as heavy as Minis come, but it's also heavy

The Mini's interior is funky as usual, but the materials are nice and help convey a premium car feel.

CHEVROLET COLORADO Z71 DURAMAX | UPDATE DODGE CHARGER SRT HELLCAT | UPDATE HONDA HR-V EX | HONDA PILOT AWD ELITE | KIA SEDONA SX | UPDATE KIA SPORTAGE EX AWD | UPDATE LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER SPORT HSE TD6 | MAZDA MX-5 MIATA CLUB

MAZDA CX-3 AWD | MINI COOPER S CLUBMAN ALL4 ARRIVAL | MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SEL | NISSAN MAXIMA SR | SUBARU BRZ UPDATE | SUBARU OUTBACK 2.5i | VOLKSWAGEN GOLF SPORTWAGEN 1.8T | VOLVO XC90 AWD

RIDE ALONG FOR UPDATES ON OUR LONG-TERM FLEET

SPECS 2017 Mini Cooper S Clubman All4

PAUL LAGUETTE

CO2 emissions **0.77** lb/mi		MT figure eight 26.5 sec @ 0.67 g (avg)
7.0 sec 0-60 mph	15.4 sec @ 88.4 mph Quarter mile	107 ft Braking distance, 60-0 mph

Vehicle Layout Front-engine, AWD, 5-pass, 4-door wagon
Engine 2.0L/189-hp/207-lb-ft* turbo DOHC 16-valve I-4
Transmission 8-speed automatic
Lateral Acceleration 0.89 g (avg)
Curb Weight (F/R Dist) 3,451 lb (58/42%)
Energy Cons, City/Hwy 153/109 kW-hrs/100 miles

*221 lb-ft with temporary overboost

on price. The Clubman S ALL4 base price rings in at $30,300, but ours comes loaded to $38,750 with options such as the Sport and Technology packages, not to mention the extra $1,750 for the automatic transmission. Picking the eight-speed over the manual saves you 1 mpg in both highway and city driving.

There's frankly nothing mini about the new Clubman, but does it still offer that combination of fun, style, and practicality that we loved about the original? We hope to find out during the next year.

2016 Subaru BRZ Carlos Lago

"Enjoyable acceleration from the BRZ requires lots of gear changes. Fortunately, the shifter always feels light and precise." @carloslago

Service life / 10 mo/16,443 mi
Avg CO2 / 0.63 lb/mi
Energy cons / 109 kW-hrs/100 mi
Unresolved problems / None
Maintenance cost / $0 (2-oil change, inspection, tire rotation)
Normal-wear cost / $0
Base price / $26,190 **As tested** / $28,485

REAL MPG **FUEL ECON** 30.8 MPG comb.

Some people don't like driving manual. That's perfectly acceptable. All I ask is that you be honest about it. I've never understood the "I don't want to drive a manual in traffic" excuse. Back in college, I commuted in rush-hour traffic an hour each way with a manual Acura Integra GS-R. You want to talk about working the clutch? That no-torque front-drive wonder needed constant shifting to keep with the flow.

Once I tried to drive home without touching the brakes. I did all my slowing by reading traffic and downshifting, and I nearly made it until someone cut me off mere miles away from finishing. Cue hard brake application and immense anger.

Now, years later, I find myself in a manual BRZ navigating rush hour and occasionally wondering if I can pull off the feat. Maturity holds me back, but I still think about that Integra. Both cars have enough power but need 7,000 rpm to make it. As a result, both cars require more clutch and shifter usage than you might anticipate. Fortunately, both cars do clutches and shifters justice.

A good shifter is important—vitally so if you need to use if frequently. The BRZ's comfortable shift knob offers good mechanical feel when you engage a gear. Throws are spaced well: not too far to exert needless arm movement but not too tight to make you think you think you've missed. It even feels good to pull up on the reverse lockout ring; I catch myself doing it at stoplights. Good pedal placement makes it easy to match revs on downshifts while approaching those stoplights, and the clutch feedback makes it easy to get away smoothly.

Although fun, the frequent shifting can highlight the dead spot in the BRZ's engine. The 2.0-liter makes a respectably flat torque curve, yet output dips from 3,500 rpm to 4,500 rpm. You notice this dip regularly because it happens right at the engine speed where you'd normally shift. If you accelerate more aggressively, like me, you can end up right in that zone after an upshift. I'm sure something exists to fix this in the aftermarket, but I've settled on a solution for the time being: full-time full-throttle.

From how the knob fits your hand to the length and effort of the throws, the BRZ's shifter does everything right.

Exploring an ORV area in the mountains above Lake Elsinore, California.

One of my favorite and most used interior features is the refrigerated center console.

2016 Land Rover Range Rover Sport HSE Td6 William Walker

"My eyes widened, and I gasped a little. I think the service manager could see the shock on my face when he told me the service fee."

Service life / 7 mo/15,963 mi
Avg CO2 / 0.83 lb/mi
Energy cons / 140 kW-hrs/100 mi
Unresolved problems / None
Maintenance cost / $876.65 (2-DEF refill; 1-oil change, inspection, tire rotation, cabin air filter, fuel filter) **Normal-wear cost** / $0
Base price / $72,445 **As tested** / $83,510

REAL MPG FUEL ECON 26.9 MPG comb.

Once again the *Motor Trend* long-term fleet has gone to the bullpen. Angus MacKenzie's move to London meant the Range Rover was in need of a new shepherd, and as luck would have it, here we are, my introduction into the world of luxury automobile ownership.

Before his departure, Angus clicked off a few thousand miles on a road trip from Los Angeles through Nevada, Utah, and Colorado. That road trip combined with a couple of months spent as a support vehicle and troop carrier during our annual Of The Year season meant we have already reached the Range Rover's first service interval at the 16,000-mile mark.

Service A includes engine oil and filter replacement, tire rotation, fuel filter and cabin air filter replacement, alignment, lubricating wheel hubs, and a comprehensive inspection of the rest of the systems. All this can be yours for the low price of $845.63. Excuse me?

The sticker shock nearly made me swallow my own tongue. "Oh, and we need to refill the diesel exhaust fluid, so that will be $1,045.63 total," the service adviser said. Luckily, we had just refilled the DEF for a mere $10 at a gas station. I understand dealers will mark up goods and services, but $200 to refill something no more difficult than windshield washer fluid is absurd.

The bad taste was diminished by the customer service I received at the dealership. A complimentary loaner vehicle was welcomed luxury that comes with owning a premium brand. Another thing that helps sooth the sting of an $845.63 service is the 16,000-mile service interval. This will be my one and only service unless I put some serious miles down in the next few months.

I look forward to getting back on the road—and off it—and enjoying all of the Range Rover's capabilities. Hopefully the next update is filled with a little more adventure.

The 2017 Kia Sportage's 22.6 Real MPG combined rating falls in line with its EPA rating, but it still falls behind many of its direct competitors.

The Sportage's TPMS with individual tire readouts alerted me to consistently low pressure. The culprit? A nail in the tire.

2017 Kia Sportage EX Zach Gale

"Thanks to a do-it-yourself upgrade, the #MTGarage Sportage now has Apple CarPlay and I use the feature every day." @zachgale

Service life / 2 mo/4,879 mi
Avg CO2 / 0.86 lb/mi
Energy cons / 149 kW-hrs/100 mi
Unresolved problems / None
Maintenance cost / $0
Normal-wear cost / $0
Base price / $27,895 **As tested** / $32,595

REAL MPG FUEL ECON 22.6 MPG comb.

We can't all be mpg stars. That's the unfortunate reality with our long-term Kia Sportage. After testing the Sportage and most of the rest of the class with our $150,000 gas analyzer on a set testing route for Real MPG, here's what we found.

Our 3,616-pound Sportage with its 181-hp 2.4-liter inline-four earned a Real MPG rating of 19.4/28.5/22.6 mpg city/highway/combined. That's well short of the crossover's AWD EPA rating of 21 mpg in the city, but it's also impressively above the 25-mpg highway rating. Unfortunately, an increasing percentage of the driving many of us do is in traffic or in the city ... or on the highway at city speeds. Even if you don't live in perpetually congested Los Angeles, city mileage is important—the EPA's annual fuel cost calculator is based on 55 percent city driving.

The bottom line is that you're not going to get as much out of every gallon of fuel in the Sportage as you would with many others in its class. And that subtly affects the long-term costs to own whatever car you're considering. Further, a more efficient car with a decent-sized fuel tank will allow you to drive by the gas station more often, and yes, there's also that thing about it being better for the environment.

The Sportage does offer a cool multimode driving system I really like, but the Eco mode not only affects the accelerator pedal's sensitivity (good) but also reduces the weight of the steering too much (not so good). The mechanically related Hyundai Tucson gets better mileage from a turbo-four/dual-clutch automatic setup, but I've found that combination also has a few driving dynamics limitations in the real world.

If I were in the market for a $25,000–$37,000 crossover, fuel economy is definitely one consideration that would move the Sportage lower on my list. Even so, there's much more to this Kia than that, so stay tuned as we comprehensively explore the Sportage over the next several months.

2016 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Jonny Lieberman

"I've long regretted not getting the Cadillac CTS-V Wagon into WGDR. No such problem with the Hellcat!" @MT_loverman

Service life / 7 mo/14,492 mi
Avg CO2 / 1.30 lb/mi
Energy cons / 226 kW-hrs/100 mi
Unresolved problems / None
Maintenance cost / $79 (oil change, inspection)
Normal-wear cost / $1,057 (1 set Pirelli P Zero tires, mount and balance)
Base price / $68,640 **As tested** / $73,725

AVG MPG FUEL ECON 14.9 MPG comb.

Every year at the tail end of our annual Best Driver's Car competition, we line all the contenders up on a giant runway and drag race 'em. Why? Well, as Angus MacKenzie famously put it, "Because we can." We call the video that results from this loud and dusty mayhem the World's Greatest Drag Race. Check out all *five* of the previous WGDRs on our YouTube channel. However, we noticed something in the comments from last year's WGDR.

Both the Dodge Challenger Hellcat and Dodge Charger Hellcat were new last year and therefore technically eligible to participate. However, because the cars in WGDR are in fact the cars from BDC and because we didn't invite either flavor of Hellcat to participate in last year's BDC, we held a Hellcat-free WGDR. Our YouTube commenters noticed. There were dozens like this: "Can u put a Dodge Charger hellcat in next drag race."

Fast forward, and, hey now, I've got a Dodge Charger Hellcat SRT. For one year, at any rate.

Very few family sedans get the clear bra treatment. Fewer still make 707 horsepower and drag race for kicks.

The question then became would the Hellcat be quick enough? The best result we've seen with this particular Hellcat is an 11.9-second quarter-mile run at 122.8 mph. That's hauling the mail for a vehicle that weighs well over two tons, but this year's WGDR competition is particularly fleet. Looking more carefully at the Vbox file, "my" car actually ran an 11.86-second quarter. A handful of competing cars were indeed slower than the big, red four-door family sedan and its air-conditioned seats.

After shockingly little discussion, we cut the absolute slowest vehicle from the 2016 Best Driver's Car (RIP Aston Martin V12 Vantage S) and let the Charger Hellcat run in its place. Did this pacify the YouTubers? You probably know the answer. "Hey, why no Koenigsegg lol?" As for how "my" Hellcat finished, 3 million people already know the answer. If you'd like to have a watch, visit YouTube.com/MotorTrend. Most important to Dodge fans, it beat the Mustang and the Camaro.

2016 Honda HR-V (EX) Scott Evans

"Don't judge a CUV by its size. This HR-V has a ton of space inside and it's been very handy in home improvement projects." @MT_Evans

Service life / 3 mo/4,971 mi
Avg CO2 / 0.60 lb/mi
Energy cons / 104 kW-hrs/100 mi
Unresolved problems / None
Maintenance cost / $0
Normal-wear cost / $0
Base price / $22,045 **As tested** / $22,407

REAL MPG FUEL ECON 32.4 MPG comb.

Whatever preconceptions I had before taking on the HR-V as my new long-term vehicle, a slew of unsolicited compliments was not among them. Not because there's anything wrong with the HR-V but because it isn't traditionally "cool." Nonetheless, it's drawn as many compliments and interested strangers at this early point in its test as my last car, the Camaro Z/28, did.

Clearly, there's no direct comparison between a Z/28 and an HR-V. Why all the attention then? I reckon it's simply a matter of mass appeal. Only car enthusiasts bat an eye at a car like the Z/28. Even luxury cars rarely turn heads in this town. The HR-V, though, is attainable. Not only that, but it's also desirable for everyday shoppers. Compact and subcompact SUVs and crossovers are the hottest segments right now. All those friends and relatives you have who wouldn't know an Acura from an Aston Martin? They're looking at small crossovers for their next car.

Honda makes a great shifter, and even the HR-V is no exception. Plus, it's way more engaging to drive than the CVT, which with all-wheel drive adds a full second to the HR-V's 0-60 time.

We recently ran our standard instrumented performance testing on the HR-V. Our HR-V hit 60 mph in 8.5 seconds, the same as the HR-V manual we tested at SUV of the Year last year. Through the quarter mile, it was 0.1 second and a 0.1 mph behind at 16.5 seconds at 83.2 mph. Braking from 60 mph was identical at 125 feet, but the skidpad number improved ever so slightly from 0.83 g average to 0.84. The figure-eight lap also improved, down 0.3 second at 27.5 seconds, although average lateral grip dropped 0.01 g to 0.60. Overall, the HR-V proved incredibly consistent.

None of the numbers are bad considering it's packing only 141 hp and 127 lb-ft of torque. That's the result of a 2,899-pound curb weight and decent gearing in the six-speed manual. Multiple editors have commented on how nice the shifter feels (an underused Honda specialty), and they're right. Now, if only the clutch had any feel at all.

To make the most of Mercedes' technological might, we checked all the boxes; the price escalated quickly.

2015 Mercedes-Benz CLA250 4Matic Chris Clonts

"What I will miss most about the @MBUSA 2015 CLA250: the steering. The weight plus the flat-bottomed steering wheel is a perfect pairing." @CClonts

The "under $30,000" teaser price (which didn't include destination charges) that Mercedes heralded when it released the CLA into the U.S. market is long gone. So are the commercials with Willem Dafoe as Lucifer.

But it looks like the CLA is here to stay, as it quickly became popular, if polarizing, for its looks. Our long-termer, in Cirrus White with racy red accents provided by the Sport Plus package, garnered many compliments, questions, and thumbs-up at stoplights and gas stations.

To make the most of Mercedes' technological might, our model checked most of the boxes. The base price of $34,425 for the 4Matic powertrain escalated quickly. After adding the better brakes, suspension, exhaust, and looks of the Sport Plus package ($3,900), the $2,300 Premium package (sound system, heated seats), and the blind-spot assist package for $550, and some smaller options, the price totaled out at a shoulda-got-a-C-Class sticker of $46,140.

If you carry passengers rarely, the CLA is a wonderfully upscale city-commuting vehicle. It's compact enough to fit into most spaces, easy to parallel park, and big enough that you don't feel vulnerable in traffic.

Driving the CLA250 was a great experience, with one exception—the transmission. The seven-speed dual-clutch defaults to Eco mode and was lethargic to the point of frustration with painfully early upshifts and lukewarm acceleration. Switching to Sport mode was far better for acceleration but elevates the rpm for shift changes to the point of melodrama. The quickness was appreciated; the thrashy nature of it was not. We longed for some middle ground and hope Mercedes can adjust the shift mapping on a future refresh.

Service life / 12 mo / 18,525 mi
Base price / $34,425
Options / Sport Package Plus ($3,900: AMG appearance package, suspenion and exhaust tuning, 18-inch AMG wheels), Multimedia package ($2,480: navigation, rear camera, SiriusXM traffic & weather), Premium package ($2,300: premium audio, heated seats, keyless entry/starting, garage door opener, auto-dimming mirrors), panoramic sunroof ($1,480), bi-xenon headlights and LED taillights ($850), blind spot monitor ($550), 12-color ambient interior lighting ($155)
Price as tested / $46,140
Avg fuel econ/CO2 / 21.6 mpg / 0.90 lb/mi
Problem areas / None
Maintenance cost / $181.18 (oil change, inspection) **Normal-wear cost/** $0
3-year residual value*/ $22,800 / $25,100
Recalls / Camshaft weld problem

REAL MPG CITY/HWY/COMB FUEL ECON
19.3/26.9/22.1 MPG

*IntelliChoice trade-in/retail (at 42,000 miles)

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2015 Mercedes-Benz CLA250 4Matic	
POWERTRAIN/CHASSIS	
DRIVETRAIN LAYOUT	Front-engine, AWD
ENGINE TYPE	Turbocharged I-4, alum block/head
VALVETRAIN	DOHC, 4 valves/cyl
DISPLACEMENT	121.5 cu in/1,991cc
COMPRESSION RATIO	9.8:1
POWER (SAE NET)	208 hp @ 5,500 rpm
TORQUE (SAE NET)	258 lb-ft @ 1,250 rpm
REDLINE	6,500 rpm
WEIGHT TO POWER	16.8 lb/hp
TRANSMISSION	7-speed twin-clutch auto.
AXLE/FINAL-DRIVE RATIO	4.13:1 (1-2,4-5,R); 2.39:1 (3,6-7)/2.01:1
SUSPENSION, FRONT; REAR	Struts, coil springs, anti-roll bar; multilink, coil springs, anti-roll bar
STEERING RATIO	14.4:1
TURNS LOCK-TO-LOCK	2.6
BRAKES, F;R	12.6-in drilled, vented disc; 11.6-in disc, ABS
WHEELS	7.5 x 18-in, cast aluminum
TIRES	235/40R18 95Y Continental ContiSportContact 5P
DIMENSIONS	
WHEELBASE	106.3 in
TRACK, F/R	60.9/60.8 in
LENGTH X WIDTH X HEIGHT	182.3 x 70.0 x 56.6 in
TURNING CIRCLE	36.1 ft
CURB WEIGHT	3,493 lb
WEIGHT DIST, F/R	60/40%
SEATING CAPACITY	5
HEADROOM, F/R	38.2/35.4 in
LEGROOM, F/R	40.2/27.1 in
SHOULDER ROOM, F/R	56.0/53.2 in
CARGO VOLUME	13.1 cu ft
TEST DATA	
ACCELERATION TO MPH	
0-30	2.1 sec
0-40	3.2
0-50	4.7
0-60	6.3
0-70	8.5
0-80	11.0
0-90	14.0
PASSING, 45-65 MPH	3.4
QUARTER MILE	14.9 sec @ 92.6 mph
BRAKING, 60-0 MPH	108 ft
LATERAL ACCELERATION	0.94 g (avg)
MT FIGURE EIGHT	25.6 sec @ 0.75 g (avg)
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,800 rpm
LATERAL ACCELERATION	1.05 g (avg)
MT FIGURE EIGHT	23.5 sec @ 0.91 g (avg)
TOP-GEAR REVS @ 60 MPH	1,250 rpm
CONSUMER INFO	
STABILITY/TRACTION CONTROL	Yes/yes
AIRBAGS	Dual front, front side, f/r curtain, front knee
BASIC WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
POWERTRAIN WARRANTY	4 yrs/50,000 miles
ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE	4 yrs/50,000 miles
FUEL CAPACITY	14.8 gal
EPA CITY/HWY/COMB ECON	24/32/27 mpg
ENERGY CONS, CITY/HWY	140/105 kW-hrs/100 miles
CO2 EMISSIONS, COMB	0.72 lb/mile
REAL MPG, CITY/HWY/COMB	23.6/30.0/26.1 mpg
RECOMMENDED FUEL	Unleaded premium

Kids and parcels in the back seat? No problem. Anything else? Determine by how much you like your friends.

But the CLA's steering almost makes up for the transmission issue. Although it's electric, it responds accurately. The Sport Plus package includes constant-ratio steering, and for someone who loves to drive, it's the perfect weighting, and the assist when turning is almost intuitively modulated. And the awesome perforated-leather flat-bottomed steering wheel with red stitching adds to the vibe of, "Hey, wanna drive? I'm game."

With the transmission in Sport mode and a driver pushing it through a canyon road, the CLA250 is fun to toss around. It is more than quick enough to execute pretty much any maneuver you'd want, whether that's passing the tractor going uphill on a rural road or gunning it at freeway speeds to squeeze into that spot as you approach an off-ramp. There aren't that many dirt roads in metro L.A., but we could feel the AWD system working while driving briskly on curvy roads and on the few days when it rained. Of course, you're never going to steer the CLA250 with the throttle like you can with a RWD car, but the 4Matic is a definite improvement over the front-drive CLA250.

The front seats are quite sporty, although some have complained that the bottoms and backs are a bit thin on padding. The bolstering felt great for my average-size 5-11 frame, but it might feel small for someone wider. The fore-and-aft adjustment range is absolutely huge and easily fits drivers with long legs. But when exposed to California sunshine, the black seats had us pining for ventilated versions.

For a compact, back-seat space is better than a "2+2" situation but definitely not for regular (or lengthy) use by adults. The sloping roofline, which makes the CLA look so svelte, slashes back-seat headroom despite the bottoms of the seats being angled back to compensate. And the sightlines from the back seats are only slightly better than those from a bathyscaphe. So: Kids and parcels? No problem. Anything else? Determine by how much you like your friends.

The COMAND infotainment system turned out to be quite intuitive with its dial-and-press controller and quick learning curve. Responsiveness seemed faster than some touch systems.

It's hard to equal the Mercedes-Benz dealership experience. For our regular service intervals—and when we had a check-engine light (just a known loose connection)—the service was quick with upscale pastries while we waited. Our total for routine maintenance, amounting to one oil change at 10,000 miles, was $181.18. The closest competitor we've had recently was the 2015 Audi A3 1.8T, for which the oil change and inspection was $384.86. But the Audi's interval was 15,000 miles, meaning that over 45,000 miles, the CLA owner would come out about $430 ahead.

From a compact car, we were frustrated by the CLA's fuel economy. Our observed mileage from the CLA250's four-cylinder turbo powertrain was a meager 21.6 mpg combined. That's far worse than the 26/38/27 city/highway/combined EPA estimate and our Real MPG combined result of 26.1 mpg. My commute involves a ton of backed-up stop-and-go traffic, but that only partially explains it. The cost difference between our observed and Real MPG number: $419.07 over 15,000 miles with premium gas at $3.50. All checks at the dealership indicated everything was normal with the engine. So be ready for frequent fill-ups if you live in a large metro area with lots of traffic.

People have already answered whether the CLA250 will sell with an emphatic "yes." Dynamically, we hope Mercedes can recalibrate the unappealing transmission shift settings. And because that entry price has surged a bit, we'd advise sprinkling some top-tier technology into lower trim levels as standard equipment.

Although the CLA250's front seats are good, the back seats and storage options are severe compromises.

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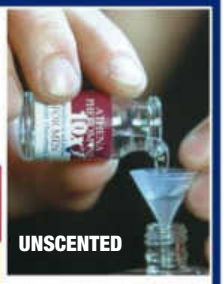

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Angus MacKenzie

The Big Picture

PROVING A POINT

WHY WE TAKE THE HARD ROAD IN CHOOSING CAR OF THE YEAR

We could do it the easy way. We could spend a day or two thrashing a few of our favorite cars along some fun local roads then sit down over pizza and beer and argue about which one we liked best. By the end of the night, as we're savoring bourbon and cigars around a backyard fire pit, we would have chosen our Car of the Year. There. Done and dusted. Hey, Jonny, pass the Willett, will ya?

Or, to make our lives even easier—and gratify our bean counters who grit their teeth and sign off on the hefty expense reports—we could simply conduct a poll of the *Motor Trend* staffers as to which car they think should be COTY. Given that we would have driven most of the contenders at some point during the year, the car with the most votes would win, and we could spend some of the money saved on a nice, long lunch.

Except we do it the hard way. The *Motor Trend* Car of the Year program is an event months in the planning and weeks in the execution. Simply wrangling all the cars to a remote desert proving ground is a major logistical exercise, as every new or significantly updated vehicle in the United States is eligible for the award (up to $120,000)—and we try to get multiple examples of each model to evaluate different powertrain, suspension, and trim configurations. But that's just the start of it.

When I arrived at *Motor Trend* in 2004, I wanted to make the Car of the Year judging process as transparent as possible. The contenders were not to be judged in the abstract but against a set of clearly articulated criteria. And the way in which each contender was evaluated needed to be fair, consistent, and repeatable. I'd seen, over many years of testing around the world, how a panel of far-flung judges testing on different roads under different conditions could result in entirely different opinions being formed about an identical car.

The Hyundai Motor Group California Proving Ground, near Mojave, has therefore been a key element of our COTY program since 2006. The 4,300-acre facility gives us the opportunity to enable every judge to get behind the wheel of every contender on the same roads under the same conditions. Each judge drives a loop that includes the 6.4-mile high-speed oval, the 3.1-mile winding road course, and a series of special-surface sections that include reproductions of some of Los Angeles' most notoriously rough freeway sections.

2017 MOTOR TREND CAR OF THE YEAR®

The two days spent at the Hyundai proving ground helps sort the COTY finalists from the also-rans in a driving environment that provides a consistent baseline. The judges can concentrate on evaluating each contender against the criteria instead of worrying about traffic, where to make the next turn, or staying in convoy. The 43-acre vehicle dynamics area, home to our 1,740-foot *Motor Trend* figure-eight course during the event, is useful not only for limit testing but also as a venue for group walk-arounds to evaluate overall design, fit and finish, interior packaging, and other key features. Only after those tests do we take the cars to a prescribed street route for real-world testing under replicable conditions.

Meanwhile, the *Motor Trend* photo and video teams are all over the facility, constantly harvesting Car of the Year imagery to deploy across our print, web, video, and social media platforms, racing the clock just before sunset to make the most of golden hour, when all the group glamour shots are taken.

There are occasions, when it's 100-plus in the shade and a vicious desert wind is gusting across the blistering tarmac, that deciding Car of the Year over beer and pizza after a quick drive or with an office poll and a long lunch sounds like a great idea. But choosing Car of the Year is not about doing it the easy way. It's about doing it the right way. ■

The Grand Tour Comes to America

CLARKSON, HAMMOND, AND MAY TELL ALL ...

Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond, and James May are on the move. After leaving the BBC's *Top Gear* last year after Clarkson got in an altercation with a producer, the trio has regrouped for a new adventure backed by Amazon Prime Video that will tour the globe in the coming months. We had a chance to grab a drink with the trio in L.A.

***Motor Trend*: Thanks for doing this, and welcome. How did your guys' taping go this weekend?**

Jeremy Clarkson: Well, the day before was enormous. The biggest thing we've ever done.

Richard Hammond: It's sort of a grand opening of the whole thing. But on scale, we've never done anything like this.

JC: It was an ambitious start, the first six minutes was very expensive in relation to the total budget, and then we did the show taping. I'd love to be able to say, as is the usual way with us, that everything went wrong, but it didn't.

Did you three enjoy your time off between *Top Gear* and *The Grand Tour*?

JC: Well, that was about three minutes. In fact, it wasn't even that long because offers started rolling in. We've never had an agent; never really had a lawyer. We haven't got a production company.

RH: We had to really reinvent ourselves. We were doing things that we've never done before. God knows how many years of experience in broadcasting and writing we've got between us, but none of running a business. That's been part of the voyage, really.

JC: The problem is we got some offices and some big ideas for it. We're going to make a seating area and maybe a bar, and we're going to have these pictures on the walls. We got it in there, and that's it. I have nothing on my walls.

James May: We did choose some carpet. That's all we've done. I did specify a picture hook on the wall, but I never got around to putting a picture on it. It's just a hook. That's become the decoration in itself.

So tell me, what's *The Grand Tour*, and how is it different from *Top Gear*?

JC: It's different.

RH: I mean, it's us. We are what we are, and that's why we're all still together. We're all more than the sum of our parts. This is what we do. But this has forced reinvention on us, which is what Jeremy said. You know, we wouldn't have done that otherwise. Why should we? [*Top Gear*] was a massive hit—big, known all the way around the world—why would we reinvent it? Well, because of the way things are going, we have. And that's reinvigorated us, fired us up, made us all feel 20 years younger.

JM: It's forced us to do what we should have done anyway, which is have a bit of a rethink.

JC: Some things get stale. It was time to go in a new and different direction.

JM: Me, mainly.

JC: Now we've been forced to think of new things, new elements, because we want the show to be bigger, bolder, and better than anything we've done before. By and large, half of the show is films; half of it is in the studio—the tent, which runs around the world—so the audience is different from week to week. I just want people to know it's us, but everything's different.

RH: As we go on doing our thing, there's adventure, there's travel, there's new cars, there's exciting cars.

JC: Old cars, shit cars.

Is it hard making a new car show when you presumably have BBC lawyers breathing down your necks?

JC: No, to be honest. We know full well what aspects of the old show we can't use, and we're not going to use them. You'll turn it on, and you know instantly, "I'm not watching *Top Gear*."

RH: It's an attitude; it's us. It has to be. What else could we do?

JC: But you've got our irreverence, our refusal to listen to any help to save your life.

RH: Idiocy, stubbornness—it's us.

What countries did you guys tour in filming this season?

JC: The films were all done everywhere. Jordan, for example. The King there built this remarkable town where every year, all of the world's special forces go and compete against one another, and so we went to see how we'd get on. And then there's Barbados. There was a marvelous moment where James was cast adrift. He was being carried gently in the crystal blue waters. He fell off the boat. We couldn't be bothered to rescue him, so he was just being carried toward this really rather lovely bar called Mullins.

JM: I was a half mile away, but I knew I was going to land at this bar. I could see. I mean, I was pretty close. Then the bastards rescued me. I hated it.

Speaking of being cast adrift, Richard, you've been forced to ride a dogsled to the North Pole and abandoned on the top of a Canadian mountain. Why do they keep picking on you?

JC: He likes it!

RH: I have to like it!

AMAZON ORIGINAL

The Grand Tour

JC: James May just admitted moments before we arrived here, he got up on a Sunday morning and went on the North Circular or South Circular in London on his new motorcycle. We're very different from James, but he [points to Hammond] will go off sometimes on his own and actually just live for a weekend defecating in a bucket in the Lake District.

RH: I do enjoy it.

JC: So when we're looking for somebody to go to Canada—

RH: It's going to be me.

JC: If we want someone to go off on his own early on a Sunday morning and ride a motorcycle round a boring ring road, it will be James.

So I saw you guys had a Ferrari LaFerrari, McLaren P1, and Porsche 918 Spyder lined up for episode one. How difficult was that to make happen?

JC: It is unbelievably difficult. I mean—I, I think I'm not talking out of turn—Ferrari makes tremendous cars, but my god, they're difficult to deal with. We got to the point where we had them all lined up and were picking a track and McLaren said no to what was then our test track, which we shared with McLaren. It was their own track!

RH: It's not like they don't know it.

JC: But they also knew that the Porsche would be quick around that track. That was before the Ferrari came along. Then the Ferrari came along, and whatever track Ferrari agreed to, McLaren didn't. But we have done it, and it's in show one. It's a car show. You know, a lot of people have been saying that we won't do a car show.

Why wouldn't you?

JC: Well, actually there's a good reason because a very large number of people who watched us actually don't even like cars and moaned if we did a car test. When you have your core audience, as we call them, who loves cars, and they want to see the latest, fastest thing going around corners and then you got people who really aren't interested in Ferrari going around the corner too quickly while I'm shouting, so they just want to see us catch fire. That became really tricky, and we faced it with *The Grand Tour*. I think we've got the balance just right.

RH: But it has to have that credibility, and we do think long and hard about the car stuff that's in it because it matters to us, but we do appreciate it doesn't matter in the same way to everybody watching. It's an amazing film.

JC: We have to undersell the program.

RH: It's really not very good at all.

JC: I know now everyone's expecting because it's Amazon, "They can say what they want, they can swear, and they can make all the money in the world. It will be profound. They'll do it on Mars every week!" So we have to undersell it. We don't want people to think the show is only about cars, but in terms of car films, we've never done anything as good as the Ferrari/McLaren/Porsche film. I know we were given the three best props; if you're going to make a film about cars, you simply can't beat those three.

Can't wait to see it. Thanks for your time, guys. Anything else to add?

RH: Do you want me to tell you the truth about James May?

Yes, please.

RH: Oh! Or we can talk about Jeremy's hard drive. I got it all here.

JM: He has. It's been confiscated.

RH: Well, we really owe genuinely everything to the audience for coming to us and following us through our successes because it's been a hell of an adventure.

Indeed it has. Thanks again, guys.

THE GRAND TOUR'S FAVORITES

We asked *The Grand Tour* hosts what their favorite car they've driven over the past year is, and here's what they had to say:

CLARKSON:
The Alfa Romeo Giulia Quadrifoglio blew me away. Alfa actually made the car that you want to buy.

HAMMOND:
I love the Challenger Hellcat. It was just fantastic. It made me laugh.

MAY:
Apart from the LaFerrari, probably the Acura NSX. I came away wanting one quite badly. It's very civilized; it does feel like a Civic. It's as easy to drive as one—there's nothing intimidating about it.

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